

Controversy trails murder at Oba's coronation

- Victim's family accuses police of cover up
- We have settled it within us – King's aide
- He went to get baby food – Wife



Adeniyi

BY LAWRENCE ENYOGHASU

THE family of the late Adeniyi Adaraloye is still benumbed by the cold murder of their bread winner.

Adeniyi, popularly known as Asiwaju, was killed on November 25 during the coronation of Oba Semiu Orimadegun Kasali of Igbogbo in Ikorodu, Lagos. Asiwaju was killed right in front of the palace while jubilation was going on.

The Adaraloyes are dissatisfied with the report by the police about the circumstances of his death and are thus, reluctant to bury Adeniyi's corpse until they find out what truly transpired at the palace on the fateful day.

The deceased, a retired worker with the Federal Inland Revenue, recently completed his Higher National Diploma programme with the hope of being recalled to service. The 47 year-old has spent the last three years studying Business Administration at the Lagos State University (LASU).

Ironically, he was killed a week after obtaining his certificate.

His death left the care of his seven children to his widow, Omolara.

Narrating their ordeal to *Saturday Sun*, Omolara said she started looking for Asiwaju about 7 pm on the day he was killed, adding that the deceased apparently having a premonition. He had no plan to step outside his house, but was moved by a good news he received from a counterpart in Abuja, who said there was a good chance of his being reabsorbed.

"He has never had any quarrel with anybody in this area. He had no friend. All his friends don't reside in this area. He started staying here because he was retrenched. On that day, he ate yam and later slept off in fulfillment of his promise that he was going to sleep all through the day. But later, he got a call. I was not close to him when the call came. But I could hear the con-



The palace

versation, faintly. It was a call from his friend who travelled to Abuja. The person who called gave him some information on steps that he was going to take to be recalled to service.

"The call made him change his plans. He decided to go to the motor park. He later met me at the shop that he was going to the park. I then begged him that he should endeavour to get his baby some food. Then, he left with my phone and his phone. Around 5:05 he called through my neighbour's phone and asked about the food I asked him to buy. Then, I didn't see him as it got late. But, I didn't have any place where to call him, so I waited till late in the night when my neighbour came home and one of the calls went through," Omolara recalled.

It was a Good Samaritan who returned the phone the following morning, who told them that Asiwaju was shot at the Oba's palace and was left to die by the onlookers.

When they finally got to the general hospital, where the deceased was taken, they were told that he was just injured and that he would come home in the evening. "I knew something bad had happened. I was shouting on them to allow me see him because, if I were to be in the hospital, he would not rest unless he set his eyes on me," Omolara said, baffled by the secrecy shrouding her husband's death.

Mrs. Sumbo Adaraloye, Asiwaju's mother was seen being consoled by symathisers, when *Saturday Sun* visited the family house. The 67-year-old woman would not stop crying, as she lamented that she could not believe that his son would struggle to go to school at almost 50 only for him to be killed and left unattended to by the people, even as she alleged that the police were hiding information from them about the controversial murder.

"The wife said he received a call that he should come to the motor park to know when he

was going to travel to Abuja to assume duties. It was that hope that made him leave home for the park, before he was shot dead. It was the baby food he bought that was used to identify him at the station.

"When we tried to find out what transpired, we were told that he died in front of the Oba's palace. The police told us that he was passing by when a stray bullet hit him on his lap and he died instantly. It was on the Oba's coronation day, so there was much crowd there," the wife said.

Asiwaju's younger sibling, Ajibode, also could not hide her anger at the alleged hasty manner the police are closing investigation into the killing. According to her, Asiwaju left with his phones active, but on getting to the police station, the two phones were switched off. She added that it was during attempts to get the phone that the family was told that two rival vigilante groups had confronted

each other.

"When he was shot, one of the phones dropped and someone picked it up. It was when we called the number that the person told us that he saw the phone on the floor where two rival groups shot fighting at each other. When we told him to bring the phone, he told us to come and collect it at a filling station called Remdamsy. Reamdamsy is the office of the local vigilante group. The next day we went and collected it from the person. The other phones were received from the police station, switched off, she said.

Ajibode believed that the police were hiding information and had not given them the autopsy report.

"The police are hiding information because the matter involves the king. The king's palace told us that they had their own security, that what happened didn't involve their security. I don't know how a security group paid to guard a place will see another security group and not know them and be comfortable doing their job. Now, that something tragic has happened, they are denying having any knowledge of it. The police know what happened and they are not telling us. I think they have decided to cover the incident. From what we gathered, people told us that someone came out of the palace with a gun and shot straight at him and returned into the palace.

When *Saturday Sun* visited the palace, a man, who claimed to be the king's aide seen attending to people, said the matter had been closed.

"If that matter is what you came for I am sorry it is not an issue. We have already settled it. It is a community affair and it has been resolved by the elders," the aide said.

The police are yet to give their side of the story. But the Police Public Relations Officer, (PPRO), Dolapo Badmos, said efforts were being made to properly investigate the matter.