

injunction by sacking the chief registrar and explained that the so-called order did not include the prayers granted her by the court. Okonkwo added that the state government could not, without recourse to the state House of Assembly, have dissolved the JSC as, according to him, the constitution states that only the governor, through the state legislature, can dissolve the JSC.

On the issue of the N89 million judicial complex contract, the acting chief registrar contended that the judiciary is an independent arm of government, separate from the executive, and that the CJ has powers to approve contracts following recommendations by the judiciary tenders board. He said the CJ had reconstituted the board on realising that it was made up of only lawyers. Okonkwo cited instances where Okoli's predecessors had awarded contracts far above the one in question. He maintained that the past government of Chris Ngige in the state awarded the same contract for N201 million, but that Okoli had insisted that the contract should be awarded by the state judiciary. The judiciary tenders board, he stated, consequently reduced the contract sum to N89 million. He further explained that the state judiciary is not bound by any ceiling in the award of contracts, asserting that the constitution empowers the JSC, not the executive arm of any government, to make rules guiding operations of the judiciary.

Okonkwo denied the allegation that the chief judge forged the chief registrar's signature in the contract documents. He said the deputy chief registrar had to sign the column meant for the chief registrar based on the CJ's special order which he directed as such.

However, the competence of Obi in resolving the crisis remains doubtful in view of its government's inability to enforce its earlier dissolution of the state JSC. The outcry that greeted the JSC's April 10, 2006 dissolution appears to have scared Obi stiff such that he may have decided to distance his government from the current imbroglio. The earlier dissolution was widely described as an unconstitutional act which did not have the consent of the state House of Assembly, and not a few had, consequently, called for the governor's impeachment.

Obi, last week, denied receiving any petition concerning the ongoing crisis in the state judiciary. Mike Udah, chief press secretary to the governor, last week, told TELL that the governor, being a peace-loving person, would not hesitate to restore order to any troubled establishment in the state.

# Death in the Family

**Funsho Williams, a front runner for the governorship ticket of the Peoples Democratic Party in Lagos State is killed in his home**

By OLUKOREDE YISHAU

**“W**hoever killed Funsho Williams is an enemy of democracy.” That was the reaction of Lateef Raji, secretary, Alliance for Democracy, AD, Lagos State, to the killing of Funsho Williams, an engineer and chieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, last Thursday. His represents the reactions of people who learnt of the death of the politician last week. Williams' death put an end to his ambition to become the governor of the state. He was stabbed to death by suspected assassins at his Corporation Drive, Dolphin Estate, Ikoyi home.

His death came less than one week after his supporters and those of Adeseye Ogunlewe, former minister of works, clashed in Ikorodu, Lagos. The clash was at a PDP rally organised for aspirants on the party's platform as a means of selling themselves to the people of the town. The bubble burst around 2.30 pm at Ogbara House, Ayangburen Road, Ikorodu, where Williams' campaign office is located. Supporters of Ogunlewe, who is an indigene of the town, were said to have seen the siting of the office as an affront. Gunshots rent the air and people had to scamper to safety. The essence of the rally was thus not realised. And, in the end, many went home with either broken limbs or other forms of injury. It took the intervention of the police to restore calm.

Later that day, another rally organised by the PDP in Gbagada, also in Lagos, turned violent. The clash at New Garage playground, Gbagada featured hoodlums bearing dangerous weapons on the excuse that they were refused entrance into the venue. Ogunlewe was not present at the rally but other aspirants such as Musiliu Obanikoro and Deji Doherty were there. Regular and riot policemen were drafted

there to ensure some sanity. Even at that, violence was unleashed on people and vehicles were vandalised. The party bigwigs later left the scene when it was apparent the hoodlums would not give up.

Williams had vied for the governorship of the state twice in the recent past. He contested for the ticket of AD on December 21, 1998 and lost to Governor Bola Tinubu of Lagos State. Williams left the party in protest and joined the PDP. A commissioner for works in the military government of Olagunsoye Oyinlola (now the Osun State governor), he clinched the ticket of the PDP in 2003 but lost that election yet again to Tinubu. In the run-up to the 2007 governorship race in the state, Williams had emerged as a major contender for the ticket of the party, which has no fewer than 10 other aspirants angling for it.

The development in the PDP has been roundly condemned by the AD in the state. Raji, who described Williams as a very tolerating politician, told the magazine that the PDP is putting the democratic system in jeopardy. He cited the unresolved murders of Bola Ige, late attorney-general and minister of justice, and Marshal Harry, late chieftain of the All Nigerian Peoples Party.

Bode Ojajuni, police public relations officer, Lagos State Police Command, declined to give details. He said it was only the commissioner of police that was competent to talk about the murder.

**Additional report by KAYODE FASUA**



**Williams: Who killed him?**