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Nigeria: Tribunal - AC Key Witness Murdered

This Day (Lagos)
20 August 2007

Posted to the web 20 August 2007

THIS DAY

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Wole Ayodele
Lokoja

On-going Election Petition Tribunal in Kogi State has assumed a deadly dimension, as Principal witness to the Action Congress (AC) at the Tribunal, Mr Victor Obafaiye was assassinated yesterday at Kabba, by yet to be identified assailants.

Obafaiye, in his early 40s, was the Campaign Coordinator and witness to AC House of Representatives Candidate for Kabba/Bunu/Ijumu Federal Constituency, Mr Richard Akanmode, and a star witness in the Gubernatorial and House of Assembly Election Petitions for Kabba/Bunu Constituency, nullified over violence that characterised its conduct.

According to Akanmode who confirmed the killing to THISDAY on Phone, Obafaiye is very crucial and central to AC case of at the Tribunal, as he is said to be in possession of several documents relating to prosecution of the party's case. His killing would definitely deal a great blow to the fortunes of the party at the Tribunal.

Though details of his death is still very sketchy as at the time of filing this report, THISDAY gathered that he left home at about 1.00a.m. on Sunday, after receiving a call from a yet to be ascertained friend. His corpse was found dumped in a canal near the Sango market with its neck twisted.

Lamenting Obafaiye's killing, Akanmode, who is challenging the election of Honourable Dino Melaye of the PDP at the Tribunal said, "his assassination is a great blow to the Action Congress, especially at the on going Tribunal. Before his killing, there had been several attacks on my Counsel, Chief U.M.Enwere and the last one being the violent attack on the team mandated by the Tribunal to verify electoral materials at Kabba/Bunu.

But I must say that we didn't expect them to go to this extent," he said.

Also reacting, State Chairman of AC, Chief Mike Adeleye condemned the killing of Mr. Obafaiye and described the incident as a vindication of the position of the Tribunal on the Kabba/Bunu House of Assembly Petition as well as a confirmation of the AC's earlier position that there is a killer squad within Kabba/Bunu PDP.

"The assassination of Obafaiye is a continuation of the violence that was visited on the people of Kabba/Bunu during the April election by PDP and it further shows that the Tribunal was right by nullifying the House of Assembly election in the Constituency. We in the AC have always said that there is a killer squad within PDP in Kabba/Bunu because this is not the first political killing in the area."

Continuing, he said "It was an incontrovertible fact AC supporters were

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killed in the local government by Political thugs and this has been proved beyond reasonable doubt at the Tribunal. Don't forget also that it was in Kabba/Bunu that the former Chairman of the State Independent Electoral Commission, Late Phillip Olorunnipa was murdered in cold blood by political assassins and all those charged to Court in connection with his killing were PDP Chieftains", he stressed.

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However, Chief Adeleye disclosed that he has reported the incidence to the state Police Command in Lokoja for necessary action that might lead to the arrest of those behind the dastardly act.

When contacted on Phone, Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Ambrose Igbokwe said he is yet to be briefed on the incident but promised to get back as soon as he is briefed on the development.

Meanwhile, the remains of Mr. Victor Obafaiye has been deposited at a mortuary in Kabba pending when full autopsy will be conducted on his corpse in order to assist the police in unraveling those behind his killing.

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