

Assassins kill Rep* As Oyo politics gets messier

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A MEMBER of the House of Representatives representing Lagelu Federal Constituency, Honourable Segun Oladimeji (alias Segelu) has been assassinated by suspected assassins.

He was killed around 9.30pm at a relaxation joint in Ejioku, Lagelu Local Government area of Oyo State on Friday night. During the incident, three other people sustained gun shot injuries. Among those injured were the personal assistant to the politician, Alhaji Isiaka Obideyi, the Senior Legislative Assistant (SLA), Mr. Peter Dairo and one other person who is still receiving treatment at an undisclosed hospital.

The relaxation joint where they were shot is just a few metres away from the party office of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, in the local government. Hon. Oladimeji was a close associate of the strongman of Ibadan politics, Chief Lamidi Adedibu. When Sunday Vanguard visited the slain politician's house along new Ife Road, hundreds of sympathizers including the Oyo State Governor, Otunba Adebayo Alao-Akala, Chief Lamidi Adedibu, PDP chieftain, Senate Leader, Senator Teslim Folarin and members of the Oyo State House of Assembly were among the callers.

Meanwhile, Governor Alao-Akala has promised a cash reward of N10 million to anyone who can give useful information that would help the police unravel the mystery surrounding the killing.

How he died: Two of his aides who were with him at the time the assailants attacked him narrated how it all happened to Sunday Vanguard.. His personal assistant, Alhaji Obideyi said, "we were standing together at the party office when two men emerged. Three of us were with him. I, the Senior Legislative Assistant, and one other person. I was the first to be shot. Then I fell down. Where I was lying, I heard them saying they came to collect money from Baba Agba meaning elderly one as the slain politician was popularly called.

When the honourable saw the way they were beating me, he identified himself as the man they were looking for.

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Immediately he identified himself, the two men opened fire on him. When I saw him falling down, I ran away”.

Giving his own account, the SLA, Mr. Dairo explained: “we were together when two men came in a Honda Accord car. When they said they were looking for Baba Agba, it was the P.A that accosted them. He was arguing with them. As soon as they identified him, they rained bullets on him. He fell down and I crawled out of the place”. When asked if he could identify the assassins, he said he could not see their faces as they were in the dark. Possible cause of death: Both Governor Alao-Akala and his godfather, Chief Adedibu, ruled out the possibility that it was an armed robbery attack.

Akala, who sobbed when he visited Segelu Hotel where the admirers of the slain politician stood in clusters, said it was evident that the killing was politically motivated.

He said, “there is no doubt that the killing was political”. While speaking with newsmen he stated that his death is not unconnected with leadership tussle in his local government. “they know that nobody can take Lagelu Local Government from him. He defeated all his opponents at the election. That was how he became the member of the House of Representatives. He died among his people”.

While the duo of Adedibu and Akala fingered leadership tussle as the possible cause of his death, his son who attended a function with him before he died linked his father’s death to intra-party crisis.

He noted that he knew that his father was close to Chief Adedibu and this might not have gone down well with other politicians. “I suspect intra-party crisis. They know that Chief Adedibu liked our father”.

Chief Adedibu corroborated this. Akala, who was visibly shaken as he spoke, insisted: “they are no armed robbers, they are hired assassins. I have spoken with the CP and he said they have made some arrests. We must unravel the killers. We will tell our people to help the police to see what they can do. We are promising that anybody who can get us useful information, we would give him N10m.

“They killed him because he had taken over the leadership of Lagelu. They just wanted to eliminate him to get him out of the way” On the likely suspects, the governor alleged that it was the handiwork of their political opponents.

Akala said.”Our political opponents were responsible for this. It is because they could not get themselves sorted out politically in the local government. I don’t know why they should kill somebody just like that”.

Arrest made so far: When the police was contacted, the Commissioner of Police, Prince Udom Ekpoudom was said to be attending a meeting. But the Public Relations Officer of the command, Miss Olabisi Okuwobi said “one person has been arrested while two of his aides who were with him at the time he was killed have been kept in protective custody to assist us in our investigation. We have enough clues. We will arrest them”.

The Police PRO, added: “It was the Assistant Commissioner of Police in charge of the Criminal Investigation Department, Taiwo Lakanu that led the police team to the residence of the politician. When he was going, two men who were with the politician at the time the assassins struck went with him”.

But the Senate Leader, Senator Folarin was skeptical about the possibility of the police to expose the killers saying “I’m not a tall optimistic. This is because, if you look at the series of high profile killings that have taken place in this country, how many of them have been resolved?. I have to be honest with you, even if they get the killers, of what use would it be and of what benefit is it?”.

Commenting further on the assassination, he described the incident as unfortunate, tragic and totally unnecessary adding that there is

“something fundamentally wrong with our political culture. Politics should not be about killing, rather it should be about settling contention through superior arguments. Look at the way he was killed in his own constituency. This is why many people find it difficult to go to their constituencies”.

At the late politician's residence, his three wives who sat beside one another with scores of sympathizers, wept uncontrollably. Out of the three women, Mrs Janet Oladimeji, Bimpe Oladimeji and Adenike Oladimeji, only Janet was willing to speak with journalists. She only recalled how the family had been praying for the slain politician adding that she did not have the premonition of his death.

His last moments: His first son, Mr. Lekan Oladimeji recalled the last moment he saw his father. According to him, he went with him to his new site on Friday. “When we came back, he went to another function, the funeral party of his father's friend, after which he went to the relaxation joint at Ejioku. He used to go there everyday”.