

They killed Oyerinde in my stead — Oshiomhole

●Labour to protest murder

BY GBENGA OLARINOYE

OSOGBO—EDO State Governor, Mr. Adams Oshiomhole, whose slain Principal Private Secretary, Mr. Olaitan Oyerinde, was buried in his home town, Ede, Osun State, yesterday, said he was brutally murdered by yet-to-be-identified gunmen because of the inability of the assailants to eliminate him (Oshiomhole).

Oshiomhole, who spoke at the burial service for the late Oyerinde at the National Youth Service Corps, NYSC, Orientation Camp, Ede, ascribed whatever achievements he might have recorded in Edo State to his late private adviser.

He said: "If we have changed anything in Edo State since we came into office about four years ago, it is probably because Olaitan is a private adviser. It was a struggle between me and NLC which equally wanted to retain him as the Assistant Secretary General of the Congress."

Oshiomhole pledges to immortalise Oyerinde

Oshiomhole, who arrived the venue of the burial at 2p.m. in a private helicopter, pledged to name a street after the slain labour activist and also to take upkeep of the children and widow.

The governor, who described himself as the chief mourner, said Oyerinde, though killed, would continue to live as he had paid the service to live after death.

Oshiomhole, who explained that he appointed him as his Principal Private Secretary due to his courage and diligent attitude to work, said he has lost a son and a compatriot who served him wholeheartedly with the fear of God.

He said: "Olaitan Oyerinde will continue to live after death. The killers of Oyerinde have only succeeded in wasting their bullets. The spirit of Oyerinde and those things he stood for while on earth can never be killed. He will continue to live forever as long as

Nigeria remains."

Extolling the virtues of the late labour leader, Oshiomhole, who called for justice on the murder of Oyerinde said: "He was a fighter to the core. He was an Edo fighter, though an Osun indigene. He lived a life worthy of emulation by all and sundry. There is nothing anybody can do to convince Oyerinde on whatever he believed in. He was a great comrade and a freedom fighter."

Nigerians demand justice

However, before the arrival of the Edo State governor, the burial ceremony turned to a protest rally as civil society organisations, students and human rights groups high-jacked the ceremony, demanding justice on the murder of the late labour activist.

Human rights activists, labour leaders and students across the country stormed the NYSC Orientation Camp, venue of the ceremony and gave seven days ultimatum to the Federal Government and the Nigeria Police to produce the killers of the late Oyerinde or face the wrath of the masses.

On the occasion, Lagos lawyer and rights activist, Mr. Femi Falana, in his eulogy, described Oyerinde as a dependable person who was an embodiment of discipline and struggle for freedom, saying "the only thing the government can do is to ensure that justice is done on the death of Oyerinde."

He said: "Oyerinde was a victim of reckless political killings in the country. He was killed by those who think they can murder truth. He was a soul that represented many things to us. The country is no longer safe for any person. Even President Goodluck Jonathan admitted that he himself is not safe again, so, who else is now safe in Nigeria?"

Falana, who demanded immediate justice on unresolved assassination cases in the country, called on security agencies, especially the police to unravel those behind the killing of

Oyerinde, or face the wrath of Nigerians, saying the Federal Government must produce the killers of Oyerinde for continuous peace in the country.

National President of the Nigeria Labour Congress, NLC, Mr. Abdulwaheed Omar, who also called for justice on the murder of Oyerinde, also gave a seven-day ultimatum to the government to produce Oyerinde's killers, stressing that labour would protest across the country should the government fail to unravel the killers of the late labour leader.

He said: "Though they have succeeded in killing Oyerinde, they cannot succeed in killing what Oyerinde stood for. The government and security agencies fail to fish out his killers we will be on the street to look for his killers."

Aregbesola eulogises Oyerinde

Also, Osun State Governor, Mr. Rauf Aregbesola, who was represented by the state's Head of Service, Mr. Segun Akinwusi, said the late Oyerinde would be remembered as being one of those who played no mean role in salvaging Edo State from the abyss of visionless leadership.

While describing the slain labour activist as a paragon of unalloyed loyalty, Aregbesola added that "at a time when it was fashionable to sell out, betray good courtesies and become a torn coat, our comrade maintained a principled stand."

Senate President of the National Association of Nigerian Students, NANS, who spoke on behalf of students, stressed the need for the Federal Government to fish out the killers of Oyerinde, failure of which he said would lead to mass protest across the country.

The Secretary, Ede South Local Government, where Oyerinde hailed from, Mr. Lukman Afolabi, said the local government had concluded arrangement to immortalise him by naming an edifice after him in Ede.