Four Kidnappers To Die By Hanging In A/Ibom

Akwa Ibom map

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By Iniabasi Umo

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Four members of a notorious nine-man kidnapping syndicate who terrorised residents of Ikot Abasi in Akwa Ibom State and neighbouring communities in Rivers State have been sentenced

to death.

The Akwa Ibom State High Court presided by Justice Archibong Archibong sentenced the convicts to death by hanging.

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The convicts were found guilty of kidnapping the proprietor of Jon KAMSY Supermarket in Ikot Abasi, Mr Chijioke Anyanwu, after collecting a N3 million ransom from his family.

They are Marvelous Ndah, 38, a native of Ikot Iyire, Edemaya in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area; Anthony Anthony Akpan, 37, an indigene of Ekput in Ibiono Ibom Local Government Area; Aniema Eshiet, 34, from Oborenyin in Ikot Abasi; and Onyebule Gift Ogbonna, 41, from Omuma Local Government Area of Rivers State.

It was learnt that the convicts kidnapped Anyanwu in front of his residence in Ikot Abasi on January 25, 2016, and collected N3 million ransom from his family.

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Unfortunately, the victim died in their custody, and his body was buried in a shallow grave at Ikot Iyire, Edemaya, Ikot Abasi.

When the corpse was discovered four months later, it was exhumed and the family buried him in his hometown of Agulu, Anambra State.

The convicts stood trial alongside two other defendants, Uche Success Nwokocha and Chidi Christian Nwokoma, who were discharged and acquitted for lack of evidence linking them to the kidnap.

The four-count charge against them was based on conspiracy, contrary to Section 552 of the Criminal Code, Cap 38, Laws of Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria 2000, and kidnapping, contrary to Section 1(2) of the Akwa Ibom State Internal Security and Enforcement Law, 2009.

Delivering the judgment, Justice Archibong Archibong found the four defendants guilty as charged, noting that the prosecution proved its case beyond reasonable doubt.

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“I hope this judgment will act as a deterrent to those who, like the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 6th defendants, and all those who aspire to be like them,” the judge held.

According to the prosecution, the same gang kidnapped a lecturer with Akwa Ibom State University, one Mrs Jewel Emem Thomas, from her residence along Ikpetim Road, Ikot Abasi on April 16, 2016 at about 2am.

It was learnt that the gang collected a ransom of N2 million droped at Bolingo Mortuary Road, off Igwuruta, Port Harcourt, from the husband of the victim and dumped her at Ibekwe Road near ALSCON Company in Ikot Abasi, after giving her N80 transport fare.

Investigations by the Department of State Services (DSS) led to the arrest of Marvelous Ndah who confessed to his involvement in the kidnapping of the lecturer and several other abductions.

In his extrajudicial statement, Ndah said he collected N400,000 as his share of the Anyanwu ransom and participated in at least four kidnapping operations in 2016.

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He also confessed to the abduction of a UBA staff and a petroleum marketer in Ikot Abasi, and received N200,000 as his share of the ransom payment.

Ndah further admitted his involvement in the kidnapping of a former councillor in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area, Mr. Emmanuel Obot Inam, in March 2016, from which he received N150,000. His confession led to the arrest of Anthony Akpan and Aniema Eshiet.