

Court Sentences 4 Kidnappers To Death For Killing Businessman

By **Inibong Ekponta** 24 Hours Ago in News



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An Akwa Ibom State High Court sitting in Uyo has sentenced four kidnappers to death for kidnapping and killing an Anambra State-born businessman, Mr Chijioke Anyanwu.

The convicts were found guilty of abducting and subsequently killing Anyanwu, the proprietor of Jon KAMSY Supermarket at Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, after collecting a ransom of ₦3 million from his family.

The convicts include 38-year-old Marvelous Ndah, a native of Ikot Iyire, Edemaya, in Ikot Abasi LGA; Anthony Anthony Akpan, 37, an indigene of Ekput village, in Ibiono Ibom LGA; Aniema Eshiet, 34, from Oborenyin community in Ikot Abasi LGA and Onyebule Gift Ogbonna, 41, from Omuma LGA, Rivers State.

They were standing trial alongside two other defendants, Uche Success Nwokocha and Chidi Christian Nwokoma, who were discharged and acquitted for want of evidence linking them to the kidnapping of the late Anyanwu.

The defendants were arraigned on a four-count charge bordering 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.

However, delivering the judgment, Justice Archibong Archibong, found the four defendants guilty, holding that the prosecution had proved its case beyond a reasonable doubt to warrant their conviction.

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The gang had on January 25, 2016, abducted Mr Anyanwu in front of his residence in Ikot Abasi LGA, but he later died in controversial circumstances in the custody of his abductors after the collection of ₦3 million ransom from his family.

His remains were later buried in a shallow grave at Ikot Iyire, Edemaya, Ikot Abasi LGA, but his decomposed body was discovered and exhumed about four months later.

Evidence before the Court further revealed that on April 16, 2016, the same gang kidnapped Mrs Jewel Emem Thomas, a female lecturer of Akwa Ibom State University (AKSU), from her residence along Ikpetim Road, Ikot Abasi LGA, at about 2 am.

The Court heard that the lecturer's husband had pleaded with the kidnappers to take him instead and spare his wife, but they refused.

The gang, therefore, directed him to deliver a N2 million ransom at Bolingo Mortuary Road, off Igwuruta, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

After collecting the ransom on April 19, 2016, at about 9 pm, the kidnappers dumped the victim at Ibekwe Road near ALSCON Company in Ikot Abasi and gave her N80 to transport herself home.

Investigations by the Department of State Services (DSS) led to the arrest of Marvelous Ndah on April 26, 2016, along Abak Road in Uyo, who later confessed to his involvement in the kidnapping of the lecturer and several other abductions carried out by the gang.

His confession led to the arrest of Anthony Akpan and Aniema Eshiet.

In his extrajudicial statement, Ndah admitted collecting N400,000, as his share of the Anyanwu ransom, and participating in at least four kidnapping operations in 2016.

He also confessed to the abduction of a UBA bank staff and a petroleum marketer in Ikot Abasi, from whose ransom payments he collected N200,000.

Ndah further admitted involvement in the kidnapping of Mr Emmanuel Obot Inam, a former Councillor in Ikot Abasi LGA, in March 2016, from which he received N150,000.

Also, his co-accomplice, Akpan, in his statement, admitted providing intelligence that led to the kidnapping of Emmanuel Obot Inam, on April 9, 2016, and said he was responsible for buying food for the victim and collected N100,000 from the ransom.

Akpan also confessed to participating in the kidnapping of the AKSU lecturer, stating that he monitored Police activity around the UNION Bank axis near her residence.

According to him, he received the sum of N120,000 from that ransom and disclosed plans by the gang to kidnap a former Chairman of Ikot Abasi LGA, Architect Ufot Udoinyang, before his arrest.

For his part, Eshiet told investigators that he guarded the kidnapped lecturer for five days at Ndah's residence and collected N125,000, as his share of the ransom.

He also admitted supplying information on Architect Udoinyang to the gang led by one Justice Okiribo, alias "Razy," who was still at large.

The fourth convict, Ogbonna, was also found to have actively participated in the criminal operations of the gang.

Justice Archibong, however, discharged and acquitted Uche Success Nwokocha and Chidi Christian Nwokoma, holding that the prosecution failed to establish credible evidence linking them to the kidnapping of the late Mr Anyanwu.