

# Tricycle driver bags 10-year jail term for killing colleague

December 3, 2025 12:42 am



A Lagos State High Court sitting in Tafawa Balewa Square

By Onozure Dania

A Lagos High Court sitting at Tafawa Balewa Square on Tuesday convicted and sentenced a 42-year-old tricycle driver, Godswill Akpan, to 10 years imprisonment for killing his colleague, Baba Ali Bukar, aged 30.

Justice Yetunde Adesanya found Akpan guilty of involuntary manslaughter, holding that the prosecution proved beyond a reasonable doubt that he caused the death of the deceased.

Akpan was arraigned on October 18, 2021, on a one-count charge of involuntary manslaughter by provocation, based on an information dated December 17, 2019.

According to the prosecution, Akpan unlawfully killed Bukar by hitting him in the chest with a stone.

The incident occurred on June 1, 2019, around 12:45 p.m. at the Eko Hotel Roundabout, Victoria Island, Lagos.

The offence committed contravenes Section 225 and is punishable under Section 299 of the Lagos State Criminal Law, 2015.

Akpan pleaded not guilty at arraignment, and the case proceeded to trial.

The prosecution called one witness and tendered one exhibit.

Akpan testified in his own defence but called no other witness and produced no exhibit.

During the trial, the Investigative Police Officer informed the court that no autopsy was conducted because the deceased's brother objected on religious grounds.

The IPO said, "No autopsy was conducted as the deceased's brother said it was against their religion."

In his testimony, Akpan recounted that the deceased confronted him at the loading point, accusing him of violating the queue system after he picked up a single passenger who chartered his tricycle for N700 to Obalende.

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He said the argument escalated into a fight during which both men exchanged slaps.

According to him, the deceased attempted to hit him with a stone, prompting him to retaliate by hitting the deceased in the chest.

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Bukar reportedly collapsed instantly and later died in the hospital.

The deceased's brother came around 4pm and said Bukar had died.

He said he didn't know the deceased before the incident.

In her judgment, Justice Adesanya held that Akpan retracted his statement during the trial.

Justice Adesanya noted inconsistencies in Akpan's statements, observing that he retracted parts of his earlier account during trial.

She held that the circumstantial evidence was strong and unambiguous, adding that the prosecution had successfully established its case.

"The prosecution has proved its case, and Akpan is guilty of involuntary manslaughter as charged. I therefore convict Godswill Akpan," the judge ruled.

During allocutus, defence counsel pleaded for leniency, describing Akpan as remorseful, a first-time offender, and the breadwinner of his family. He urged the court to "temper justice with mercy."

Justice Adesanya subsequently sentenced Akpan to 10 years' imprisonment.