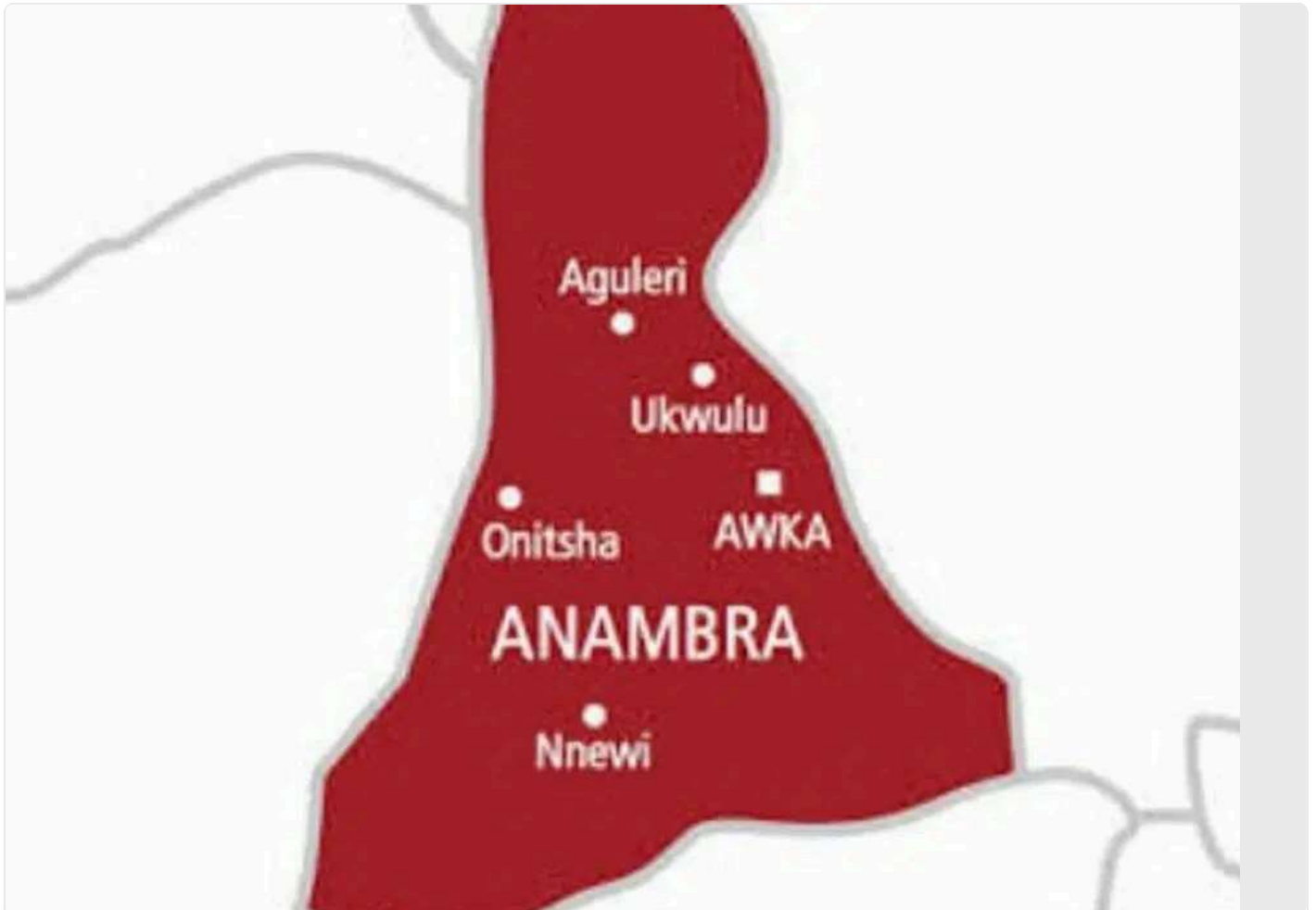


Court sentences tricyclist to death for murder in Anambra



A High Court in Oba, Idemili South of Anambra, has sentenced a commercial tricycle operator, Makuachukwu Ezike, to death by hanging for the murder of a passenger during a “one chance” robbery operation.

Trial judge Justice Laretta Oyeka, in her judgment, convicted Ezike of the murder of Jude Onwuegbuchunam, an indigene of Umuoji in Anambra.

Justice Onyeka held that the circumstantial evidence against Ezike was compelling, citing the abandoned tricycle and him fleeing from the scene as strong indicators of guilt.

She also relied on the convict’s voluntary confession and the medical evidence linking the victim’s death to the injuries he sustained after being pushed from the moving tricycle.

The court consequently found Ezike guilty of murder and sentenced him to death by hanging.

Earlier, the prosecution, led by Mrs L.N. Umeozulu, told the court that on Nov. 17, 2019, Ezike and two accomplices, who are at large, operated a “one chance” robbery syndicate along the Oba-Obosi-Nkpor-Umuoji Road.

The gang, the prosecution said, disguised themselves as commercial transport operators, picked up Onwuegbuchunam as a passenger and attempted to rob him of his mobile phone and other valuables while in transit.

The prosecution said that when the victim resisted and raised an alarm, the assailants pushed him out of the moving tricycle at high speed near Abidi Hall, Umuoji, where local vigilante operatives were stationed.

According to the prosecution, Onwuegbuchunam sustained severe injuries from the fall and died two days later.

The prosecution told the court that Ezike returned to the area the following day to recover the abandoned tricycle but was apprehended by vigilante operatives and handed over to the police.

The prosecution called five witnesses, including the medical doctor who conducted the post-mortem examination and testified that the victim’s death resulted from injuries sustained when he was pushed from the moving tricycle.

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Although the defence argued that there was no eyewitness account to the incident, Justice Oyeka held that the law permits conviction based on direct evidence, confessional statements or circumstantial evidence. (NAN)