

EFCC decries murder of officer, labels suspect as armed Internet fraudster

By **Matthew Ogune, Abuja**

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EFCC operatives

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has described the individual responsible for the killing of its Assistant Superintendent, Sahabi Salisu, during a midnight operation in Akwa, Anambra State, as a kidnapper and ritual killer masquerading as an Internet fraudster.

According to the commission, the officers were carrying out a legitimate operation on January 17, 2025, when Joshua Chukwubueze Ikechukwu, a suspected Internet fraudster, attacked them.

EFCC spokesperson, Dele Oyewale, confirmed the details in a statement on Thursday, highlighting the growing danger posed by Internet fraudsters to public safety and security.

Oyewale stated that intelligence reports revealed that such criminals were increasingly armed and involved in various illegal activities, including kidnapping, banditry, ritual killings, and other violent acts. He urged the public not to underestimate these criminals as mere “Yahoo boys and girls,” stressing that they posed a significant threat to society.

Ikechukwu, who is currently in police custody due to the severity of his actions, is expected to be brought to trial. Oyewale assured the public that any subsequent attacks on EFCC officers would be met with the full force of the law. The commission vowed to continue eradicating internet fraud and other corrupt practices.

Expressing deep sorrow over the loss of Salisu, Oyewale added that the operation had been properly documented with the Anambra State Command Headquarters and Area Command of the Nigeria Police, in accordance with operational protocols.

He also condemned the “irresponsible, callous, inhuman, and outrageous” social media narratives surrounding the incident. He criticised those spreading false narratives about the fatal incident, emphasising that there was no justification for rationalising the murder of a dedicated officer.

The EFCC had been at Dr J.O. Ukwutinife Close, Ifite, Awka, Anambra State, in the early hours of January 17 to arrest suspected internet fraudsters. The operation had initially gone smoothly, with 37 individuals apprehended from a two-storey building which housed Ikechukwu and others. However, Ikechukwu, who had observed the investigators through a CCTV camera, refused to open his door when approached. Instead, he opened fire, fatally shooting Salisu and injuring another officer who had been tasked with conducting a search.

Preliminary investigations revealed Ikechukwu’s involvement in internet fraud, with two laptops, iPads, and several recording devices recovered from his apartment. The commission confirmed that Ikechukwu was engaged in illegal online activities, including coding and the online sale of questionable medical supplies.

While mourning the loss of Salisu, the EFCC expressed gratitude for the support and condolences received from sister agencies and the public during this difficult time.