

Court sentences community leader to death for killing school proprietor

■ Osagie OTABOR, Akure ■

AN Ondo State High Court has sentenced a 78-year-old community leader, Ojo Komolafe, to death by hanging for killing a school proprietor, Taofik Babalola.

Komolafe, who pleaded not guilty, reportedly killed his victim with a gun in 2021.

He was said to have committed the offence on August 7, 2021, at the Kajola area of Odigbo local government area.

His victim was sleeping when he was shot in the thigh.

The prosecutor, H.M. Falowo, called four witnesses, which were the deceased's wife; a neighbour; a police officer and a pathologist.

The wife of the deceased, Mrs. Babalola, in her evidence, said she heard a gunshot and immediately ran out but saw

the convict in their corridor holding a gun.

"I saw the defendant coming out of my husband's room and I took to my heels with the fear that he could also shoot me.

"Thereafter, I rushed to my husband's room and met him on his bed in the pool of his blood, shouting with his last breath that Mr Komolafe shot him.

"I rushed out and called people to come to my aid, but my husband died in the process," she narrated.

But the convict denied the allegation saying the deceased's

wife was pressured to mention his name.

He said some cultists he reported a case of arson against conspired with the deceased's wife to lie against him.

Komolafe said he was in his house with his wife when he heard the gunshot.

In his ruling, Justice Yemi Fasanmi said there were contradictions in the defendant's statement.

Justice Fasanmi held that the claim that some people conspired against the convict was a mere assumption.

He said the prosecution proved its case beyond reasonable doubt and that there was direct evidence that linked

the convict to the scene of the crime as well as being responsible for the death of the deceased.

"It is my finding that the defendant caused the death of the deceased by shooting him with a gun at a close range, which subsequently led to his death.

"The deceased was also seen fleeing the place of the crime.

"On the whole, I find the defendant guilty of the two counts as charged.

"You (the defendant) are hereby sentenced to be hanged on the neck until you die in the first count and seven years imprisonment for the second count."