

Court sentences community leader to death for killing school proprietor in Ondo

by **Hakeem Gbadamosi** June 23, 2023 in **Latest News** Reading Time: 2 mins read

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A High Court sitting in Ondo state, has sentenced a 78 year-old community leader, Ojo Komolafe, to death by hanging over the shooting and killing of a school proprietor, Taofik Babalola.

Komolafe was said to have committed the offence on August 7, 2021 at Kajola area of Odigbo local government area, and reportedly killed the victim with a gun.

Komolafe, who pleaded not guilty, but said he was roped by some cultists in the town.

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The prosecutor, H.M. Falowo, said the victim was shot while sleeping and called four witnesses, which included 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 at their corridor holding a gun.

"I saw the defendant coming out of my husband's room and then 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 forced to implicate him by mentioning his name, and explained that he was framed by some cultists who he reported to the security agents for arson.

Komolafe said they all conspired against him with deceased wife to implicate him and said he was in his house with his wife when the incident occurred.

In his ruling, Justice Yemi Fasanmi, said there were contradictions in the defendant's statement and held that the claim that some people conspired against him was mere assumption.

Justice Fasanmi 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."