

AGF takes over prosecution of 4 alleged terrorists who kidnapped, killed Imo monarch

Sunday Ejike | Abuja

THE Attorney General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi (SAN) has taken over the prosecution of four suspected terrorists who allegedly kidnapped and killed the traditional ruler of Amanze Obowo Autonomous Community of Imo State, Eze Basil Njoku at the Federal High Court in Abuja.

The sudden take over of the case by the AGF from the Inspector General of Police (IGP) however led to shifting of the date in the re-arraignment of the defendants in the amended charges brought against them.

The AGF, through his counsel, David Kaswe in-

voked Sections 174 of the 1999 Constitution and 105 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act 2015 to assume trial of the terrorism charges.

Immediately the AGF announced the take over of the prosecution, he pleaded with Justice Binta Nyako to put off the arraignment till another date to enable him study the case file and ensure diligent prosecution.

He said, the Inspector General of Police has already been directed to make the case file available to the Federal Ministry of Justice for approximate action by the AGF.

The four defendants are Jude Iheme, Chika Madukwe, Nwokorie Chidiebere Ejike and Victor Nwajuiba Obumneke.

The three count charge earlier slammed against the defendants have been increased to five in the amended charges.

Justice Nyako, after taking submissions from the AGF, subsequently fixed April 15 for the re-arraignment of the defendants.

Iheme of Amagwu Amanze Obowo local government area of Imo and Madukwe of Ndi-Uche Etiti Omuimo local government area also of Imo State, were said to have killed the traditional ruler on December 17, 2022.

The defendants were accused of killing the monarch while coming from the Federal Medical Center, Umuahia, after kidnapping and collecting a ransom of N4 million cash from his

family.

In the charge marked FHC/ABJ/CR/575/2024, Iheme and Madukwe alongside others said to be at large were said to have conspired to commit felony to wit, acts of terrorism contrary to Section 26 of the Terrorism Prevention and Prohibition Act 2022.

They were also said to have armed themselves with guns and offensive weapons, attacked, kidnapped and killed the monarch on December 17, 2022.

The IGP also accused them of failing to volunteer information at their disposal to security agencies which could have led to apprehension of other kidnappers contrary to Section 16 of the same Terrorism Act.