

# 5 to die by hanging over chieftaincy tussle

Yekini Jimoh | Lokoja

**F**IVE people have been sentenced to death by hanging by a Kogi State High Court sitting in Ankpa for the killing of the head of Akwu community, Chief Sylvester Sule, his brother Owoicho Duke and one other person.

Justice Seidu Hussaini, found the accused persons: Aliyu Amadu Makolo, Yakubu Idaji, Danjuma Yusuf, Mohammed Yusuf and Mohammed Rilwanu (Dikadi) guilty of criminal conspiracy, mischief by fire and culpable homicide contrary to sections 97(1), 337 and 221 of the Kogi State Penal Code.

A disagreement between two ruling houses in Akwu in Ankpa Local Government over

the right to produce the village head led to violence on January 29th, 2020.

In the attack, three people were killed, 22 houses and five vehicles were burnt.

Following a protracted struggle for the vacant stool, the then Ata Igala crowned one of the contenders to the throne, Sylvester Muhammedu Sule, on December 29, 2019 at his palace in Idah.

A month after, violence erupted in the community leading to the killings and destruction of property.

The trial of the accused persons started in 2020 and went through three judges before the fourth judge, Justice Seidu Hussein, finally delivered judgement on October 7, 2024.

Justice Hussaini said in his judgement that the accused persons were found guilty of a violent attack that led to the death of three people and destruction of properties in the community.

The prosecution counsel, M. A. Abaji, averred during the proceedings that on January 29, 2020, the accused men, armed with various weapons, including machetes and guns, invaded the Aku community and set properties on fire.

In the process, Abaji added, the accused men hacked Chief Sylvester Muhammedu Sule, his elder brother, Mr Owoicho Sule Onuh and one other person to death in the community.

Abaji added that the body of Owoicho Sule was thereafter dismembered, tied in a

sack and dumped in a well.

In his final written address, Abaji submitted that the defendants' pleas of not guilty were only a mere denial.

Counsel for the accused persons, Isaac Ekpa, in his final written addresses, said the prosecution had not proven its case beyond reasonable doubt to warrant the conviction of the defendants.

However, Justice Seidu said the prosecution had proved its case beyond all reasonable doubts, noting that "denying the commission of offence did not amount to not committing it."

Seidu added that the burden of proof rested on the defence counsel which he failed to achieve in the case.

"I have full satisfaction with the evidence adduced by the

prosecution. The prosecution has presented its case beyond reasonable doubt.

"The five defendants have been found guilty of criminal conspiracy, mischief by fire and culpable homicide punishable with death, contrary to sections 97(1), 337 and 221 of the Kogi State penal code, and therefore sentences them to death by hanging," he said.

Justice Seidu discharged and acquitted two other accused persons in the case,

Yakubu Ikoja and Abdulmuni Sale, for the inability of the plaintiff's counsel to prove his case against them beyond doubt.

The prosecution counsel said efforts are being intensified to arrest other suspects said to be on the run.

He said David Adoyi Abah, Tahir Abdul, Solomon Odawn Ogbo, Jibrin Okpanachi, Farouk Okpanachi and Francis Bala Abonny, who were at large, would be arrested and made to face the law.

**We are ready to conduct council polls —Kogi SIEC**

## GARBA

I, formerly Garba Shaibu now GARBA SHUAIBU. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

## ALATISE

ADDITION OF MIDDLE NAME: I. formerly Alatise Adesola

## AKINBILEJE

I, formerly Akinbileje Fehintoluwa now ADEMOLA FEHINTOLUWA. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

## OLADIPUPO

CORRECTION OF NAMES: This is to inform members of the public that, in some of my