

# Two Kogi cow thieves to die by hanging

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Two kingpins of a notorious cross border cattle rustling syndicate, Muhammed Lawal Jauro and Yusuf Sanni, have been sentenced to death by hanging by the High Court of Kogi State sitting in Okene.

The two convicts were charged before Justice Josiah Majebi on four counts.

The charges border on “conspiracy to commit armed robbery, armed robbery, criminal conspiracy to commit criminal homicide and culpable homicide,” all of which contravene the provisions of the Penal Code.

Justice Majebi found the cattle rustlers guilty on all the four charges despite their no guilty plea.

The prosecution witness had told the court that sometime in January 2016 one Dauda Abdullahi made a report of the gruesome murder and theft of the cows of one Haruna in one of the farm centres in Okene.

He said upon further investigation, the convicts were arrested at Ajase-Ipo in Kwara State while their leader, Awaijo Wetti, was still at large as of the time of the prosecution.

He said that the convicts admitted conspiring with Wetti to commit the offences and they narrated how they planned and subsequently hacked their victim to death on his farm and eventually stole his cows which they took to Ajase-Ipo before they were apprehended.

Jauro’s confessional statement, which was corroborated by Sanni, was relied upon by the court to arrive at its verdict.

The two convicts both confessed to the crime and narrated how they conspired to commit the crime in December 2015.

In his judgment, Justice Majebi declared that the confessions of the convicts were weighty and admissible in determining the case against them.

“The confessions of the respective accused persons are graphic, direct and the accused persons stated that after killing the deceased, Haruna, they went with his cows to Ajase-Ipo where they were arrested and the cows were recovered in the bush where they kept them,” the judge said.

On their denial of the offence during the trial, the court held that the denial of their guilt before the court could not be substantiated because “the admission of the commission of the said offence by the accused persons in

their respective statements is clear, specific and unambiguous.”

Justice Majebi held that the prosecution satisfactorily established that the death of the deceased was caused by the convicts as there was “a nexus between the acts of the accused persons and the death of the deceased.”

Thereafter, the court sentenced them to 28 years each on the first three counts and death by hanging on the fourth charge of culpable homicide.

“By the said pieces of evidence, I hold that the prosecution has satisfactorily established the death of the deceased and that same was caused by the accused persons. I hold that the prosecution has proved all the ingredients of each of the charges against the accused persons thereby raising presumption of guilt against them in respect of all the charges.

“It will amount to flying in the face of the evidence before the court to believe the story of the accused persons that they have no knowledge of the commission of the offences and the exhibits tendered except their handsets. To believe same is to believe the holiness of a Bishop hanging a talisman on his neck,” said Justice Majebi.