

# Court remands UNIBEN undergraduate, others for murder

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*Alexander Okere, Benin*

An Evbuoriarua Magistrates' Court in Edo State has ordered the remand of an undergraduate of the University of Benin, Esegine Rickson, and four others in custody, for the alleged murder of a church member.

*PUNCH Metro* had reported that Rickson, a pastor, a bus driver, and two others were detained at the Edo State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department over the death of the church member.

They were said to be returning from a retreat at a parish of The Redeemed Christian Church of God on Sapele Road when they encountered a speeding truck on July 2.

The driver was said to have zigzagged in order to escape a collision with the truck before it was later discovered that the church member was bleeding from the head.

The member, later identified as 19-year-old Lucky Chukwuka, was said to have died at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Moses Nkombe, had declined comment on the matter, saying that he would never talk to *PUNCH*.

However, it was learnt that Rickson and the four others, identified as Godwin Ukrakpor, 70; Taiwo Omogoroye, 42; Austin Osaikhuwuomwan, 39; and Meshak Owuh, 28, were arraigned before the magistrates' court on two counts of murder.

The accused, who were charged in a suit, marked MEV/251c/17, were also alleged by the prosecution to have acted in a manner that caused the death of the victim.

The prosecution said the offence was punishable under sections 316 and 325 of the Criminal Code, Cap 48, Vol II, Laws of the defunct Bendel State of Nigeria, as applicable in Edo.

But their pleas were declined due to the limited jurisdiction of the court.

The Chief Magistrate, Mr. Frank Idiake, remanded them in custody and referred the case to the Directorate of Public Prosecutions for legal advice.

It was, however, gathered that ruling on their bail application would be delivered on August 7.

“We have argued for bail. It (ruling) will be coming up on Monday before a vacation court,” counsel for the accused, Mr. Olayiwola Afolabi, said on Wednesday.