

Two soldiers aided Emefiele's wife kidnapping — Court papers

Published January 3, 2018

Share

Share

Tweet

Margaret Emefiele

Ade Adesomoju, Abuja

Two soldiers were involved in the September 2016 kidnapping of Mrs. Margaret Emeiele, wife of the Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria, Mr. Godwin Emefiele, a police report accompanying the amended charges filed against the suspects have shown.

The report sighted by our correspondent on Tuesday indicated that the two soldiers, Musa Maidagara and Edwin George, were arrested by the police, court-martialled and dismissed by the army authorities before they were later handed over for prosecution.

The report stated that Maidabara and George and another soldier earlier dismissed by the army authorities, Ernest Udelefe, were recruited to participate in the crime by the leader of the kidnap suspects, Mohammed Yusuf (also known as Dogo).

It stated that the soldiers were recruited by Yusuf to escort him and other suspects away from the crime scene at Ugoneki village, along the Benin/Asaba Expressway on September 28, 2016.

The two soldiers were said to have, in their military uniform, escorted the suspects and paid their shares of the N80m ransom received from the family of Margaret and other victims.

The report stated, “That the three military men (including the earlier dismissed one), knowing that the suspects might have committed a serious crime, aided them to escape from the crime scene by providing escort for them and they did so while dressed in military uniform.”

The report added, “That the two serving soldiers involved have been court-martialled by the army authorities, dismissed and handed over to the police for prosecution.”

The Federal Government had since charged the three former soldiers alongside other suspects with hostage-taking offences under the Terrorism (Prevention) Act.

They were also specifically accused of, among other offences, of impersonating the character of army officers, since they were said to have used their uniforms to carry out an illegal act.

On December 6, 2017 the prosecution filed the amended hostage-taking charges before the Federal High Court in Abuja against four surviving suspects, who, in September 2016, allegedly kidnapped the wife of the CBN governor.

The amendment followed the death of one other suspect, Umar Abubakar, who was said to have died while receiving treatment for bullet wounds he sustained in a gun duel with the police while trying to escape arrest in 2016.

All the five suspects had been in the custody of the police since their arrest, but Abubakar, alias Kiriwa, was said to have been moved to a hospital where the government said he died in November 2017.

The four surviving suspects — Mohammed Yusuf, Edwin George, Musa Maidabara, and Ernest Uduefe — were scheduled to be arraigned on Tuesday.

The police produced the four in court for the December 5, 2017 proceedings during which the lead prosecuting counsel, Mr. Aminu Alilu of the Office of the Attorney General of the Federation, announced Abubakar's death to the trial judge, Justice Babatunde Quadri.

All the defendants and Abubakar were initially charged with five counts of hostage taking on July 7, 2017.

However, following the development of Abubakar's death, the judge directed the prosecution to amend the charges to reflect the names of only the surviving defendants.

On December 6, the prosecution filed the amended charges retaining the same number of counts and all other particulars of the charges, except the name of Abubakar that was removed.

In the five counts filed against the defendants, the prosecution alleged that the late Abubakar and the four other defendants took hostage of Margaret along with others in her entourage — Odion Anthony, Ngozi Omoile, Uju Anthony and Gladys Omoile — at Ugoneki village, along the Benin/Asaba Expressway on September 28, 2016.

The AGF filed five counts under the Terrorism (Prevention) (Amendment) Act 2013 against the alleged kidnappers.

The defendants were said to have demanded N100m ransom from the victims' family members, but upon a negotiation, reduced it to N80m, which they allegedly took before releasing the victims.

The three former soldiers — George, Maidabara and Uduefe — were accused in count four, of aiding and abetting the act of hostage taking.

In count five, the three were accused of impersonating army officers "with the intent to deceive while aiding and abetting hostage taking."

The offence of conspiracy is said to be contrary to section 17 of the Terrorism (Prevention) (Amendment) Act, 2013, and punishable under the same section of the Act.

The prosecution also alleged that the defendants' act of hostage taking in counts two and three constituted an offence of terrorism contrary to section 15(1) of the Act and punishable under the same

section.

The offence of “unlawful assumption of character of officer of a security agency” is said to be contrary to section 22 and punishable under the same section.