

# Three truck conductors on trial for allegedly killing man

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**Published** July 9, 2019



Lagos State High Court Ikeja

## **Oluwatobi Akindele**

The Lagos High Court sitting in Igboosere, on Monday, commenced the trial of three truck conductors, who allegedly tied up and beat a man they accused of stealing a fairly-used Tecno phone to death.

The defendants, Bashiru Salami, Omokehinde Abdulatif and Ibrahim Ajibola, were charged with two counts of conspiracy and murder preferred against them by the Lagos State Government.

The trio, who were arraigned in December 2017, were alleged to have committed the offences on June 7, 2016.

According to the prosecutor, the offences are punishable under Section 233 of the Criminal Law of Lagos State, 2015.

The defendants, however, pleaded not guilty to the charges.

A prosecution witness, ASP Roland Ayeme, told the court that the defendants tied up one Idodo Nse-Obong and dragged him to a filling station at Tincan, Apapa, Lagos, where he was beaten to death.

He said the incident happened on June 7, 2016, around 2am, at Sand Field, Tincan.

Ayeme, who was led in evidence-in-chief by the Lagos State counsel, Mr Babatunde Sunmonu, said the case file of the incident was transferred to him at the Port Criminal Investigation Department, Apapa, on the same day by one Sergeant Oyinbo Joseph from the Apapa Police Division.

He said when he visited the scene of the crime on June 8, 2016, with his team, the Divisional Police Officer had already deposited the corpse of the deceased in the Mainland Hospital morgue.

Ayeme said while at the scene of the crime, there was a mob presence and the policemen saw blood stains on the spot, where the deceased was killed, adding that Nse-Obong was confirmed dead between 4am and 5am.

The witness told Justice Adedayo Akintoye that during investigation, it was discovered that the deceased was tied up with a rope and beaten to death.

He stated that a principal witness, Garuba Ejo, claimed that he witnessed how the deceased was tied and beaten to death, and he was the one who called the police before the defendants were arrested around 4am.

Ayeme said Ejo told him that on the day of the incident, while he was driving his truck to the Mile 2 area, he saw how the second defendant raised the alarm that his second-hand Tecno phone had been stolen by the deceased and the first and third defendants rushed out, dragged Nse-Obong to the other side of the road and beat him to death.

He said Ejo told him that there was an elderly man, who went there to stop the defendants from beating the deceased, but they chased him away with clubs and axes.

According to him, Ejo said he could not go there because it was very dark and that he was also afraid that the mob would beat him to death too.

The witness concluded that the defendants were culpable for the offence of murder as they took the law into their own hands by torturing the deceased to death.

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During cross-examination by the defendants' lawyers, Damilola Olaofe, Pamela Okoro-Igwe and Olanrewaju Mabawonku, Ayeme was asked if the deceased mentioned the name of the person who said his phone was stolen, and he said tthat Nse-Obong did not mention anybody's name.

He said it was Omokehinde, who alleged that his Tecno phone was stolen.

Ayeme also stated that the first defendant denied participating in the mob action that led to the death of the deceased.

When asked if the first defendant was arrested while he was sleeping, the witness said he was not asleep when he was apprehended.

The case was adjourned till November 11 for the continuation of trial.