

# Suspected cultist dies in remand, Lagos court seeks confirmation

(5) Matthew Agbaje

**T**HE death of an alleged member of the Eiyé Confraternity, Ayo Akintunde, in prison, stalled proceedings on Wednesday at the Ikeja High Court, Lagos State.

The deceased and his co-defendant, Abdulahi Gafar, were charged with membership of an unlawful society before Justice Oyindamola Ogala.

The offence is contrary to Section 2(3) of the Unlawful Society and Cultism (Prohibition) Laws of Lagos State, 2021.

The charge read, "That you, Abdulahi Gafar and Ayo Akintunde, on or about September 8, 2021, at Mile 12 Road, Ketu, in the Ikeja Judicial Division, were found to be members of the Eiyé Confraternity, an unlawful society."

The defendants pleaded not guilty to the charge.

During the court sitting on Wednesday, Gafar informed the court that his case mate died of tuberculosis in the Kirikiri Custodial Centre in November 2021.

However, the prosecuting counsel,

Ijabike Olawale, told the court that he was not aware of the development, but would verify the claim.

Justice Ogala adjourned the matter until September 29, 2022, for continuation of trial.

The judge asked the prison warden to ascertain the death of the second defendant and inform the court.

However, the spokesperson for the Nigerian Correctional Service, Lagos State Command, Rotimi Oladokun, told *PUNCH Metro* that the defendant died of "respiratory illness and cardiovascular difficulty"

at the Ajeromi General Hospital, Lagos.

"The prisoner had health issues at the time of arrest and was referred to a general hospital according to our policy of complicated health issues.

"The deceased was earlier arraigned at the Ogba Magistrate's Court and the prosecuting counsel and next of kin of the inmate was informed of his health problem before the case was transferred to the Ikeja High Court. His health was being managed before he eventually died on November 17, 2021," he added.