

# Husband jailed 12 years for killing wife in Lagos

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FILE: Prison

The Lagos State High Court in Ikeja on Monday convicted and sentenced a man, Akinwale Akinlabi, to 12 years imprisonment for killing his wife.

*PUNCH Metro* learnt that the convict was initially arraigned on July 26, 2021, on a count of manslaughter before the presiding judge, Justice Oyindamola Ogala, to which he pleaded not guilty.

His charge sheet read, “Akinwale Akinlabi on or about February 2, 2020, at No 23 Adeogun Street, Ijaiye Ojokoro area of Lagos State, in the Ikeja Judicial Division unlawfully killed one Cecilia Tope Akinlabi.”

According to the prosecution counsel, the one count of manslaughter is an offence that contravenes Section 229 of the Criminal Law Ch. C17, Vol. 3, Laws of Lagos State 2015.

*PUNCH Metro* gathered that during the trial which began on May 12, 2022, the prosecution’s first witness, identified as Inspector Jumai Adonduwa, testified that the deceased had reported her husband, the defendant, to the police for domestic violence before her death.

“The deceased on January 30, 2020, at about 11:40 pm, made a report against her husband, the defendant, at the station and stated that on that particular day at about 10:00 am, her husband demanded N100 from her to buy a

recharge card and when she said she didn't have any to give him, the defendant used a bunch of brooms to beat her in the presence of her son. She said she left home for peace to reign and thought that by the time she returned, all would be settled," Adonduwa said.

He then told the court that the deceased returned at about 10:00 pm and the beatings continued.

"She said the radio in the room was too loud and when she tried reducing the volume, the defendant came in from nowhere and started beating her with fist blows all over her body. The defendant then pushed her and she fell on a glass shelf in their room.

"She said the glass broke and she sustained a serious injury with a deep cut and that her husband continued to beat her and it was her son that rescued her from the defendant and that the defendant threatened to beat her to death saying that his family has money for a court case," Adonduwa stated.

The prosecution counsel further disclosed that the deceased's brother came to the Ijaiye Police Station to inform them about his sister's sudden death.

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"On February 2, 2020, at about 6:30 pm, the brother to the deceased came to the police station to report that he was in Benin when he heard the sad news of his sister's death and that he learnt that his sister had come to the station to report the case. He told the police that his sister had died as a result of beatings. The deceased's brother stated that

the defendant refused to inform them of the death of their sister and that the defendant took the corpse somewhere in Ogun State to bury it without the consent of her family,” he said.

Adonduwa further confirmed that the children reported their mother was purging blood and was rushed to the hospital where she slumped and later died.

The prosecution’s second witness, Sergeant Adeniyi Sola, testified that he was familiar with the defendant and remembered February 3, 2020, when the case was initially reported at the Ijaiye Police Station against the defendant. He stated that the case was later transferred to the SCID for further investigation. His testimony supported that of the prosecution’s first witness.

During cross-examination, Adeniyi confirmed that the first altercation occurred on January 31, 2020, and the second incident happened a day before the deceased’s death. He also assured the court that he conducted a thorough investigation into the case.

*PUNCH Metro* learnt that the defendant, testifying as the defence second witness on March 18, 2024, stated that he had been married to his wife for 21 years without any incident of violence. He revealed that January 29, 2020, was the first time the police intervened in their marital issues. The defendant also disclosed that his wife had a history of health episodes, including attacks and fainting. Furthermore, he confirmed that, to his knowledge, his late wife did not have any disagreement with anyone else apart from the January 29, 2020 incident.

Justice Ogala, in her judgment, stated that the prosecution had established beyond a reasonable doubt the single count of manslaughter against the defendant whose wife, Cecilia Tope Akinlabi, died on February 2, 2020. She held that there was consistency in the evidence of the prosecution witnesses as regards the facts leading to the fight between the defendant, his wife and the resultant injury.

The judge said, “After having carefully reviewed the evidence before the court, the evidence tendered and the position of the case law, the honourable court finds that the prosecution has provided circumstantial evidence beyond a reasonable doubt, the unlawful acts of the accused which harmed the deceased and caused her death.”

“The honourable court finds that it is clear from the evidence before it that the fatality arose from the violence (fight) that ensued between the defendant and his wife. It is also clear that the death was unintentional and that the

deceased died shortly after the fight. The fact of vertical scars on the back of the deceased as stated in Exhibit (f) corroborates the evidence of the prosecution witnesses and situates the sustained injury.

“Prosecution has indeed established the ingredients of the offense of manslaughter that the defendant is charged with. He is therefore accordingly convicted of the same.”

He ruled that, After having heard and having considered the plea of the defence counsel, and also taking into consideration the peculiarity of this case, the defendant is accordingly sentenced to a term of 12 years. The period of his incarceration, from February 3, 2020, will also be taken into consideration.”