

ECOWAS court quashes death sentence passed on minor

BY INNOCENT ANABA

ABUJA — THE ECOWAS Court of Justice sitting in Abuja, upturned the death sentence passed on a minor, Maimuna Abdulmumini, by a Katsina State High Court in 2012 for allegedly killing her husband, when she was just 13 years old.

The court also awarded her N5 million in damages for violation of her fundamental rights by the state.

In its judgment, the trial judge, Justice Hansine Donli, held that pronouncing the death sentence on the plaintiff, when she was still a minor, was a breach of her fundamental human rights and violates international law as provided in Article 6, Sub-section 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The court also awarded N500,000 in favour of Maimuna as the cost of the trial.

Avocats Sans Frontieres France, ASF (Lawyers Without Borders) had filed a petition for interim measures and accelerated hearing on Maimuna's behalf before the ECOWAS court earlier in the year.

The court ruled in her favour then and granted the interim measures application by ASF, pending hearing in the substantive matter.

Commenting on the judgment, Angela Uwandu, Head of Office, ASF, expressed satisfaction with same.

She said: "The acknowledgement of the fact that detainees have rights that must be respected in the process of legal recourse is crucial to the establishment and advancement of fundamental human rights in our country."

35-yr-old man