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## Murder suspect acquitted after six years in custody

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By Onozure Dania

Lagos—Silence pervaded the chamber of Lagos High Court, Igboere, Lagos, yesterday, as Justice Olabisi Akinlade, the judge presiding over the murder charge against a 34-year-old woman, Idowu Matthew, got set to give her judgement.

Matthew, accused of killing her lover, Emmanuel Ugochu-kwu, had been in Kirikiri Prisons for six years, five months.

She had expected the worst, wearing a mournful look and occasionally squatting in the dock.

As soon as the judge gave her judgement setting the suspect free of the murder charge, she sprang to her feet, expressing tears of joy.

Matthew said: “I prayed this morning before coming and my mother also prayed with me when I called her yesterday that my judgement was today (yesterday).

“She said I would be free. I now believe that I am really serving a living God.”

Giving her judgement, Justice Akinlade had discharged and acquitted the suspect, saying she murdered her deceased lover in self-defence.

The judge added that after going through all the evidence before the court, she had been able to establish that the accused did not kill the deceased intentionally.

The judge said the prosecution was able to establish without reasonable doubt that there was death and that the death was caused by the act of the defendant, but was unable to establish that she killed him in self-defence.

She further said that if the defendant had not killed the deceased, the deceased would have killed her, since he was pursuing her with knife.

Akinlade also admonished the prison warden not to leave Matthew alone, but take her to a rehabilitation centre where she could be re-integrated back to the society.