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Trial of SARS policemen begins in Calabar over killing of robbery suspects

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By Emma Una

CALABAR —Trial of 13 Special Anti Robbery Squad, SARS, operatives attached to the Cross River State Police Command accused of extra-judicial killing of six robbery suspects in Atambo, outskirts of Calabar in April 2014, has begun before the state high court sitting in Calabar.

The policemen comprising a Deputy Superintendents of Police, Assistant Superintendents of Police, Inspectors and corporals, have been in detention since August 2014, following a petition by a mother of one of the

robbery suspects, Dereck Ben to the Inspector General of Police, that her son was killed extra-judicially by the SARS officers.

At the hearing in the matter, yesterday, before Justice Obojor Ogar, a medical pathologist from the University of Calabar Teaching Hospital, Dr. Theophilus Ugbem, while being cross-examined by Nkanta Nkanta, the defence counsel said, “he carried out post-mortem on the bodies of the six robbery suspects, but could not specifically know, who among them was Dereck Ben, as nobody identified him among the corpses to me.”

He said he became a consultant in 2015, a year after the killing of the robbery suspects by the SARS officers.

“Normally, during post-mortem, a relative of the dead person who knows him has to identify him to you, but during the post mortem examination of the six suspects, nobody identified any of them by name to me.”

Dr. Ugbem said after the post-mortem, no other medical expert carried out another medical examination of the bodies as the one he carried out was considered adequate for any purpose.

Justice Ogar, who had two weeks ago granted the SARS policemen bail, adjourned the matter for the investigating police officer, IPO, to testify before the court.