

24-yr-old man gets 8 years in jail for killing friend over girl

A 24-year-old man, Sodiq Salaudeen, was yesterday sentenced to eight years imprisonment for killing his friend during a fight over a girlfriend at Ijanikin area of Lagos.

The convict was sentenced by Justice Sedotan Ogunsanya of an Ikeja high court, Lagos, after changing the initial charge of murder to manslaughter.

The judge observed that the three witnesses, who testified before the court, were not at the scene when the crime occurred.

He ruled: "The court will be relying on the statement of the defendant, which showed that he had no intention to kill the deceased. The statement read and I quote 'I used the iron from the Hausa man's shop to stab him on the left side of his chest. I only wanted to scare him

because I was being overpowered by him and his friends; I did not intend to kill him'.

"The court is satisfied that the prosecution proved its case beyond reasonable doubt and that the defendant caused the death of the deceased."

Pronouncing the sentence, the judge, however, said that Salaudeen's eight-year sentence will start from the day he was first detained for the crime—2012.

Prior to the sentence, counsel to the convict, Mr. K. O. Adebayo, had in his plea for leniency told the court that the convict committed the offence out of youthful exuberance.

He said: "The defendant is a young man with an aged father, who has been a

widower for quite some time. The crime occurred as a result of youthful exuberance and there was no intention to kill.

"Since the objective of punishment is to reform and not for retribution, I plea for a lighter sentence for the convict so that he can still be useful to the society."

According to the prosecutor, Mr. Adebayo Haroun, the convict, who was 19 years old when the offence was committed, stabbed one Tope Akinyemi with a sharp object in his chest during a fight.

His words: "The deceased and Salaudeen had attended the same secondary school and knew each other. They developed a liking for the same girl and a rivalry

developed between them, which led to a fight with their friends joining.

"When Salaudeen felt that Akinyemi was gaining an upper hand in the fight, he ran into the nearby kiosk of a Hausa trader to pick a sharp object, which he used to stab the deceased once in the chest, leading to his death."

During the trial, the Investigating Police Officer, IPO, Inspector Festus Imoru, confirmed that the fight that led to Akinyemi's death was caused by a female.

He told the court: "During my investigations, I got to know that the two men were asking the unknown girl out and it led to a bitter rivalry between them.

"Efforts to get the name of the girl who caused the fracas was, however, abortive."