

## 5 to die by hanging for kidnap, murder of Shell staff in Rivers

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By Davies Iheamnachor

Five persons were, yesterday, sentenced to death by hanging by a Rivers State High Court sitting in Port Harcourt on conviction of kidnapping and murder of a Shell staff, Anthony Okoro.

The five out of seven persons in suit number PHC/324/2017, Oluchi Charles (1st defendant), Miracle Anumuna (2nd defendant), Ifeanyi Simon (3rd defendant), Koko Basset (4th defendant) and Uchenna Stanley Amaechi (7th defendant), were convicted of the 10 charges preferred against them by the Inspector General of Police bordering on conspiracy, stealing, armed robbery, kidnapping and murder.

Chukwudi Etete (5th defendant) and Anthony Ugwu (6th defendant), the remaining two persons mentioned in the suit, were discharged and acquitted by the court.

The suspects had on May 29, 2016 attacked the home of one Anthony Okoro, a staff of Shell Petroleum Development Company, in Woji area of Port Harcourt. The suspects reportedly shot the victim and carried his body away with his Range Rover SUV.

The deceased's Kia Optima car, television sets, infinix phone and other valuables were also taken away by the suspects.

The trial judge, Justice George Omereji, yesterday, held that the prosecution was able to prove the case that the first to fourth and seventh defendants were as guilty as charged in the matter.

Omereji discharging and acquitting Etete and Ugwu stated that the prosecution could not prove that the duo knew about the crime, rather they bought phones belonging to the victim by mistakes.

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He also held that the prosecution proved the case of conspiracy against the suspects in law, adding that it was proven that the suspects had met at Genesis area of Woji in Port Harcourt and planned the operation and kidnap of Anthony Okoro.

The trial judge also noted that the prosecution also proved that the death of the victim was caused by the suspects, regretting that Anthony Okoro was shot on his arm and taken away with his cars and other valuables by the suspects.

However, Omereji, who based his ruling on Section 410 of the Administration of Criminal Justice 2011, sentenced the five convicted persons to death by hanging, adding that they should be held on the rope till they are confirmed dead.

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PORT HARCOURT— A Rivers State magistrate's court sitting in Port Harcourt, yesterday, remanded five kidnap suspects in prison for

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