

Killers of Afenifere leader's daughter to die by hanging — Court

By Dayo Johnson,
Akure

• *Verdict shows criminals aren't invincible, above law, says Afenifere*

An Ondo State High Court yesterday sentenced three out of four suspected killers of the 58 year-old daughter of the national leader of the Pan Yoruba Socio-Political Group, Mrs Funke Olakunri to death by hanging.

Mrs Funke Olakunri was murdered along Ore/Ijebu Ode Expressway on July 12th, 2019.

They include Muhammed Shehu Usman, Adamu Adamu, and Lawal Mazaje.

Justice Williams Olamide who convicted them on the eight count charges, discharged the fourth suspect, Awalu Abubakar for conspiracy, aiding and abetting.

The trial judge sentenced the three to death by hanging or firing squad for offences ranging from conspiracy to murder, kidnapping and armed robbery.

The convicts also attacked and killed one Matthew Ogunbiyi, a hunter in the forest while they also kidnapped a German-Nigerian who was released after the payment of ransom.

The Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Charles Titiloye had preferred eight-count charge which include included murder, kidnapping, armed robbery, aiding and abetting against four suspects.

The first to three suspects were charged with murder contrary to Section 316 and punishable under section 319 of the Criminal Code CAP 37 Volume 1, Laws of Ondo State, Nigeria, 2006.

They were also charged with conspiracy to commit armed robbery and actual commission of armed robbery contrary to Section 1 (2a&b) for the Robbery and Firearm Special Prohibition Act CAP R11, Volume 14, Laws of the Federation.

They were also charged with conspiracy to commit felony with kidnapping, contrary to and punishable under Section 516 of Criminal Code CAP 37, Volume 1, Laws of Ondo State.

During the trial, the culprits pleaded not guilty to the eight charge counts preferred against them.

The suspects, in their evidence in court, said they were not part of the kidnapping gang that killed Olakunri, noting that the police extracted false evidence against them.

On his part, Usman said he was a driver who was on transit to Ondo State from Agbor, Delta State when he was arrested with N500,000 cash and expired drivers' license, and was charged because he could provide the bribe demanded by the police.

Lawal said he was arrested by the police because he followed Usman to the police station because he understands Hausa language. He denied complicity in the murder of the Afenifere leader's daughter.

Delivering judgement, Justice Olamide dismissed their claims on the ground that their evidences were afterthought to escape the wrath of the law.

Justice Olamide said "the prosecution was able to prove

the case of conspiracy to murder, kidnapping, armed robbery and aiding and abetting against the first to third defendants.

"Verdict shows criminals aren't invincible, above law"

However, the Pan Yoruba Socio-Political Group,

Afenifere, has said that sentencing three killers to death by hanging, signalled that criminals are neither invincible nor above the law.

General Secretary of the group, Chief Olusola Ebiseni said this while reacting to the court verdict.

Recall that an Akure High Court sentenced the three suspects to death after killing the deceased in 2019.

Ebiseni, in a statement issued in Akure, said that "Though not able to bring back the dead unfortunately, the judgement sentencing to death of the murderers of Mrs. Olufunke

Olakunri, daughter of the Afenifere Leader, Chief Ruben Fasonranti, nevertheless is most welcome in several ways.

"First, the families, friends and other well meaning citizens will have a sense of relief that justice has been done, notwithstanding that these murderers have a constitutionally guaranteed rights of appeal up to the apex Court.

"Besides, it is a signal to these criminals that they are neither invincible nor above the law of the land.

"For too long, it is unfortunate that the Federal Government which monopolises the instrument of coercion and security, has given Nigerians and the world that these criminals who parade themselves as cattle rearers are above the law of the land for which they make the lives of the citizens was than in the State of nature.

Tinubu visits Bello, says he harnessed youthful energy during campaigns

By Dirisu Yakubu

PRESIDENTIAL candidate of the All Progressives Congress, APC, Bola Tinubu, Friday, visited his co-contestant and Kogi state governor, Alhaji Yahaya Bello in Abuja, saying the latter leveraged on the energy of the youths during the campaigns for the Presidential convention.

Tinubu arrived at Governor Yahaya Bello campaign office accompanied by Lagos state governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, his Zamfara and Kano state counterparts, Bello Matawalle and Abdullahi Ganduje respectively as well former Edo state governor, Adams Oshiomhole.

Describing Bello as "my son," Tinubu said Nigeria would hit the glorious height of old with the cooperation and support of all, irrespective of party affiliations.

Welcoming the APC Presidential candidate, Governor Bello announced the collapse of his campaign council and donated the same to the former

• *I'm committed to lead APC to victory*

Lagos state governor.

Bello said, "Today, I have collapsed my Presidential Campaign Organisation. I am donating my campaign organisation secretariat to you. I have learnt a lot from the little lecture you gave to us. What elders see when they are in the valley, the younger ones won't see it.

"The exercise (convention/ primaries) has come and gone. I will be on the streets to lead the youths to ensure that we win convincingly. Never again will the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP lead this country. Thank you all my colleague governors for giving me the opportunity to learn from you.

On his part, Tinubu said:

"Yahaya Bello is my son; you mobilized the consciousness of the youths in the county. You reminded us of what the nation wants to be. Today, we take a very good step to say we want to work for one united country that is concerned about prosperity. Thank you to all members of the Yahaya Bello Campaign Organisation. You all made a mark, you were

resolute." He also commended the leadership of the party for ensuring that the convention ended peacefully saying, "The opposition thought there would be chaos and crisis. But we saw peace," he said.

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