Bamise: Lagos BRT driver remanded over alleged rape, murder

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Bamise: Lagos BRT driver remanded over alleged rape, murder  
  
By Adebisi Onanuga and Anne Agbi  
  
The Lagos State Government has arraigned a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) driver, Andrew Nice Ominnikoron, before a High Court sitting at Tafawa Balewa (TBS) over the alleged rape and murder of his passenger, Oluwabamise Ayanwole.  
  
Ominnikoron was arraigned on a four-count charge bordering on rape, conspiracy and murder preferred against him by the Lagos state government before Justice Sherifat Sonaike.  
  
At the commencement of the hearing on Tuesday, the state’s Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) Dr Jide Martins, informed the court that the matter was for the arraignment of the defendant.  
  
Martins told the court that the defendant on November 25, 2021, allegedly raped a 29 year -old lady, (names withheld) without her consent.  
  
He said that the incident took place around 7 pm at Lekki- Ajah Conservation Centre, Lekki Ajah Expressway, Lagos.  
  
The prosecutor further told the court that Ominnikoron conspired with others now at large and forcefully had sexual intercourse with his 22-year-old passenger, late Oluwabamise Ayanwole, a fashion designer without her consent and murdered her.  
  
Martins said the incident happened on February 25, 2022 around 8 pm at Lekki – Ajah Conservation expressway and Carter bridge.  
  
He said that the defendant and others still at large on February 26, 2022, unlawfully killed Oluwabamise Ayanwole by throwing her out of a moving bus at Carter bridge after having sexual intercourse with her without her consent.  
  
According to the prosecutor, the offences committed were contrary to and punishable under Sections 411,223,260 and 165 of the criminal law of Lagos State 2015.  
  
Ominnikoron, 47, pleaded not guilty to the charge against him.  
  
In view of the defendant’s plea, the DPP urged the court to further remand him at the Ikoyi prison and asked for a trial date.  
  
The defendant’s counsel Mr Isaac Ezeawem did not object to the arraignment of the Ominnikoron and request of the prosecution for his continued custody at the Ikoyi Custodial Centre of the Nigerian Correctional Services (NSC).  
  
Subsequently, Justice Sonaike granted request of the prosecution and ordered that the defendant should be further remanded at the Ikoyi Correctional Centre.  
  
The trial judge adjourned the matter till May 9, 10 and 11, 2022 for commencement of trial.  
  
On March 11, 2022, a Yaba Chief Magistrates’ Court had remanded the defendant in Correctional Service custody for 30 days over his alleged involvement in the death of Ayanwole, pending the DPP’s legal advice.  
  
Magistrate O. A. Salawu made the order following an application by the State Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Yaba, Lagos.  
  
Salawu, who stood in for Chief Magistrate Tunbosun Adedayo, ruled that Ominnikoron should be kept at the Ikoyi prison pending legal advice from the Lagos State Directorate of Public Prosecution (DPP).  
  
The Magistrate adjourned the case till April 11 for DPP’s advice.  
  
The police based its remand application on a temporary four-count charge marked A/26/2022 filed by Lagos State Police Command head of legal section, Superintendent Yetunde Cardoso.