Rape: Court remands 45-year-old Rivers varsity staff

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Rape: Court remands 45-year-old Rivers varsity staff  
  
By Rosemary Nwisi, and Deborah Nnamdi, Port Harcourt  
  
A Senior Magistrate Court sitting in Port Harcourt, Rivers State has ordered the remand in prison custody of 45-year-old Mgbechi Weke for alleged rape.  
  
Weke, a staff of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE), allegedly raped his 16-year-old step daughter on January 13, 2021 at Rumuakwude community in Emuihua Local Government Area of the State.  
  
He pleaded not-guilty to the single count charge of rape preferred against; he was denied bail by the Presiding Magistrate, Gomba Osaro, on the grounds that the charged against him is a capital offence punishable by life imprisonment if convicted.  
  
The defense counsel, Matilda Okheehoo had earlier applied for the bail of the accused person, citing section 36(5) of criminal justice act 1999 which presumes him innocent.  
  
She also told the court that the defendant has a credible surety that can stand for him.  
  
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The Prosecution, from Center for Basic Rights Protection and Accountability Campaign, a Non-Governmental Organization passionate about the right of a child, Jane James objected to the bail application, expressing the fears that the accused might harm his victim and her mother if admitted on bail.  
  
She recalled that the defendant had earlier in 2018 attempted to rape elder sister to his victim, and warned her to keep it a secret between them or risked being killed apparently by him.  
  
She prayed the court to refuse bail on the Weke to save the victim and her family from danger of attack.  
  
She also prayed the court to approve amendment of the charge sheet to section 31 of child right act.  
  
In her ruling, the court declined the bail and ordered that he be remanded in Port Harcourt Correctional facility till the next adjourned date.  
  
She ordered the Prosecutor to amend the charge sheet and adjourned the case till February 22, 2021 for mention.