Court remands Edo pastor for alleged rape, DNA confirms paternity

Date: 2025-07-11

Source: https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria/metro/court-remands-edo-pastor-for-alleged-rape-dna-confirms-paternity/

A pastor, Simon Okehielem, popularly known as Ebube Wonder, has been remanded in custody by an Edo State High Court following his arraignment over the alleged rape of a married woman and fathering a child as a result of the incident.  
  
The case, prosecuted by the Edo State Police Command, stems from a March 2024 incident in the Ugolor community, where Okehielem, founder of Ebube Wonders Synagogue Prayers Ministry, was accused of sexually assaulting Mrs. Isoken Aigbedo Owie, a housewife.  
  
According to the complainant’s counsel, Barrister Clinton Ogbebor, a petition was submitted to the Commissioner of Police, prompting an investigation. Despite initial challenges in locating the accused, Pastor Okehielem was eventually arrested after months of evading law enforcement.  
  
A DNA test ordered during the investigation confirmed a 99.9% match between the child born to the victim and the accused, prompting renewed action by the police and the suspect’s re-arrest.  
  
During Thursday’s court proceedings at the Edo State High Court, Criminal Division, presiding judge Justice Erhabor ordered that the accused be remanded at the Benin Correctional Centre. The court also directed that the case file be duplicated and forwarded to the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) for legal advice.  
  
Speaking to journalists after the hearing, Barrister Ogbebor commended the police for their professional handling of the case.  
  
“The DNA results clearly established paternity, and this has brought us to the arraignment stage,” he said.  
  
He added that the case had drawn attention due to the suspect’s role as a religious leader and the serious nature of the allegations.  
  
“This matter is not only about justice for the victim, but also about reinforcing public trust in legal processes,” he said.  
  
Counsel to the defendant, Barrister Samson Okehielem, however, expressed dissatisfaction with the arraignment, describing it as premature and a violation of his client’s rights.  
  
He argued that a fundamental rights application had already been filed to challenge the legality of the arrest and to restrain the police.  
  
“They rushed to court to humiliate and paint him as a fake pastor without following due process,” he claimed.  
  
The case is now awaiting legal advice from the DPP before further proceedings can continue.