Court sentences man to 14 years imprisonment for raping a virgin

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Justice Atinuke Ipaye of a Lagos High Court Ikeja has sentenced a 32 years-old Kenechukwu Okonkwo 14-years imprisonment for raping a 29 years-old Virgin.The presiding judge, while delivering judgment yesterday, said that the prosecution proved their case beyond reasonable doubt and found him guilty of the offence. She sentenced Okonkwo to 14 years imprisonment on one count charge of rape brought against him by the Lagos State government.  
  
“In the light of all my findings, the prosecution has proven their case beyond reasonable doubt. I find you Kenechukwu Okonkwo guilty of rape contrary to Section 258(1) of the Criminal Law of Lagos State 2011  
  
“I hereby sentence you to 14 years imprisonment commence from today March 24, 2017.” Before the sentencing, counsel to Okonkwo, Mr Worer Obuagbaka in his allocutus, asked court to temper justice with mercy, arguing that Okonkwo was a first time offender and was repentant.  
  
  
  
“The convict is a first time offender and the only son of his family, he lost his mother last year to cervical cancer and he has been in custody since December 2013.“During this period, he has learnt his lesson, I plead with the court to pass a light sentence on the convict and to temper justice with mercy.”  
  
“He has been in custody since 2013, during this period he has learnt his lessons, he pleaded with the court to pass a light judgment and to temper justice with mercy. “ Oduagbaka pleaded.  
  
While delivering judgement, Ipaye said that rape is a serious crime, which must be eradicated.“Rape is an act of an extreme violence against women, society must have zero tolerance to this act against the honourable members of the society.” the judge said  
  
However, the prosecutor led by Mr Kazeem Adeniji, the Lagos State Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, showed appreciation for the judgment.“Thank you My Lady for the well considered and erudite judgment.”During the trial, the prosecution led by Adeniji said that Okonkwo committed the offence on Dec. 27, 2013 in his one – bedroom apartment located in Ketu Lagos.  
  
“The complainant was a 29-year-old saleswoman (name withheld) who was a virgin. She became friends with Okonkwo, who was a security guard working at a supermarket where she supplied goods.  
  
In her testimony before the court, the victim told court that she has accommodation problems and was about to be evicted from her home, but confided in Okonkwo about her problem and he offered to keep some of her property in his apartment.  
  
“I came to inspect his apartment, which was a ‘face me I face you,’ doubting the suitability of his apartment. I wanted to leave, but he blocked the exit, he forcefully dragged me from the corridor into his apartment.  
  
“I was screaming and begging him in Igbo language but he said I’ve been suffering him for too long, I shouted for help but he gagged me with a wrapper and forceful sleep with me in his bedroom.”  
  
She further told court that the noise and commotion in the apartment attracted Okonkwo’s co-tenants, who came to intervene to no avail.“It was when the landlord knocked on Okonkwo’s door to enquire about the noise that the complainant was able to escape.”  
  
In his defence, Okonkwo denied the rape and claimed that the sexual intercourse between him and the complainant was consensual.“We were friends, I told her I liked her and had a desire to marry her; she usually visited me at my apartment on Sundays with members of her church.  
  
  
  
“On that fateful day, I attended a naming ceremony and while I was leaving the ceremony, I received a phone call from the complainant saying that she was at my house.“I got to home, she collected the bag of pure water I was carrying and asked me what I wanted to eat and I told her I wanted to eat indomie. She changed into a pair of tights from her jeans trousers to make the indomie and I played an adult movie, which we watched together, while we had dinner. She made me promise that I will marry her and thereafter we made love,” he said.  
  
  
  
When he was cross-examined by Adeniji, the convict admitted contrary to his testimony that the complainant visited him for the first time on the day of the incident.But the judge, who noted the inconsistencies in Okonkwo’s testimony, said, “the defendant is not only economical with the truth, he should not be believed. There were inconsistencies in his testimonies and his longstanding friend, who testified on his behalf as DW2, could not recall knowing her as his girlfriend.