Man jailed nine years for sexually assaulting neighbour’s son in Lagos

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Justice Rahman Oshodi of a Lagos Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Court has sentenced Francis Onwuzulike, a middle-aged man, to nine years and six months imprisonment for sexually assaulting his neighbour’s son, a 13-year-old student of Kosofe Senior High School.  
  
The judge found him guilty as charged by the state government for indecent treatment of a child, sexual assault, and indecent acts. The convict was initially arraigned sometime in 2018 for sexual assault by penetration, to which he had pleaded not guilty. The state counsel, Miss Bukola Okeowo, commenced the trial, during which the survivor, the 13-year-old boy, testified and was cross-examined by the defendant’s counsel, Mr Olanrewaju Ajanaku.  
  
In his evidence, the survivor told the court that when he was 13 years old, the convict, who was his neighbour at No. 13 Adesanya Street, Ketu, Mile 12, sexually abused him on three separate occasions. He further explained that the convict would send him on errands and, upon his return, lock his door before perpetrating acts of sexual violence. He said that he would be positioned face-down upon the convict’s bed, whereupon the defendant would mount him from behind and insert his penis into his anus.  
  
The boy also told the court that the convict threatened to kill him if he disclosed to anyone what he did to him. He explained that it was through the intervention of the convict’s younger brother, who witnessed one of the incidents and subsequently informed his mother, that he was saved.  
  
After his examination-in-chief, and cross-examination by Ajanaku, the survivor told the court that he suffered from constipation and other health complications due to the abuse.  
  
However, Onwuzulike later approached the prosecution for a plea bargain agreement, and he was therefore re-arraigned on an amended three-count charge bordering on indecent treatment of a child, sexual assault, and indecent acts.  
  
While delivering judgment, Justice Oshodi held that he was satisfied that the convict knew the nature of the offences to which he pleaded guilty. According to him, the convict was initially charged with sexual assault by penetration, an offence which attracts life imprisonment as punishment.  
  
“Following the negotiations between the prosecution and your counsel, a plea agreement was reached, dated May 27, 2025, and having pleaded guilty to indecent treatment of a child, contrary to sections 135, 263, and 134, respectively. Under the current charges to which you have pleaded guilty and been convicted, the prescribed punishments are as follows: count one, indecent treatment of a child: seven years imprisonment; count two, sexual assault: three years’ imprisonment; and count three, indecent acts: two years imprisonment.”  
  
“I have carefully considered your plea of guilty, which demonstrates a degree of acceptance of responsibility. I have also considered the remarks you made during the sentencing proceedings, in which you expressed profound regret and made a compassionate plea for mercy.”  
  
The court further held that the convict had tendered a comprehensive bundle of certificates obtained whilst in custody in support of his plea.  
  
“The certificates, 10 in number, demonstrate remarkable dedication to self-improvement and rehabilitation during the convict’s period of incarceration. The demonstrated commitment to personal transformation and the tangible evidence of rehabilitation justify a reduction of 20 per cent from the agreed sentence of twelve years, amounting to a decrease of two years and four months.  
  
“Accordingly, you are hereby sentenced to nine years and six months’ imprisonment, which sentence shall commence from the date of your remand on September 12, 2018,” the court held. Justice Oshodi also ordered that the convict’s name be registered as a sex offender, as maintained by the Lagos State government.