Security guard bags life imprisonment over sexual assault

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.Court remands man for sexually assaulting nine-month old baby  
  
Justice Rahman Oshodi of a Lagos Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Court, Ikeja, yesterday, sentenced a security guard, Olawale Olanrewaju, to life imprisonment for having sexual intercourse with a 12-year-old girl.  
  
  
  
Olanrewaju was sentenced after he was found guilty as charged by the state government.  
  
The judge also frowned at the way the convicted was kept in prison for eight years without trial and reprimanded officials of the Ikoyi Correctional Centre.  
  
The case, marked LD/2359C/2016, was initially handled by Justice Sybil Nwaka (before she was elevated to the Court of Appeal).  
  
The delay in justice was caused by the correctional centre’s inability to produce the defendant before the court for arraignment, despite the issuance of a warrant between 2016 and 2019.  
  
“On September 18, 2019, Justice Nwaka struck out the case for want of diligent prosecution. The defendant was in Ikoyi Correctional Centre and remained there for about eight years from the day of his remand, until he was produced before me on January 3, 2023 for arraignment.  
  
“The procedure demonstrates gaps in the operation of the Nigeria Correctional Service. It is mind boggling to hear that the defendant had been in Ikoyi Correctional Centre since 2016 but was brought to court for the first time in 2023. The correctional centre was directly responsible for the defendant’s long period of awaiting trial, and this is appalling,” the court said.  
  
  
  
Nevertheless, Justice Oshodi held that the prosecution proved the ingredients of defilement against the defendant.  
  
The judge said the survivor, now 18 years old, testified before the court that she was 13 when the incident happened. She testified that the defendant was a security guard at a construction site close to her house.  
  
The survivor had told the court that the defendant forcefully had sex with her when she went to fetch water at the site.  
  
“The prosecutrix’ testimony was that she went to fetch water at the construction site where the defendant worked. He came from behind her, closed her mouth, and she found herself in a room with him. She said that the defendant ‘tore my cloth, forcefully had sex with me, and I started having pain in my vagina’.  
  
“She further said that she informed her parents about the incident and the father reported the case at the nearest police station,” the court heard.  
  
The judge added: “The survivor’s testimony was that she was taken to Mirabel Medical Centre for examination. The evidence of the survivor was corroborated by that of her father who was the second prosecution witness. The survivor gave a vivid and unshaken testimony of what the defendant did to her.  
  
“Also, the defendant contradicted himself and made his evidence-in-chief unreliable. The defendant’s denial does not hold water as he admitted knowing the survivor but made a u-turn during cross-examination, saying he did not. He also admitted that the prosecutrix came to the compound to fetch water.”  
  
  
  
The judge, therefore, found him guilty as charged and subsequently convicted and sentenced him to life imprisonment.  
  
Oshodi also ordered that the convict’s name be entered into the Sexual Offences Register maintained by the Lagos State government.  
  
In another case, Justice Oshodi remanded 28-year-old Agboola Adebayo in a correctional centre for defiling a nine-month-old baby by putting his finger in her private part.  
  
The judge made the order after Adebayo pleaded guilty to a two-count charge brought against him by the Lagos State government.  
  
Oshodi adjourned the matter till March 25 for review of facts of the case and further proceedings.  
  
The defendant was charged for defilement and causing grievous harm to the baby.  
  
The prosecution said his offences contravened the provision of Sections 137 and 245 of the Criminal Laws, Ch. C17. Vol. 3, Laws of Lagos State, 2015.  
  
Earlier, the prosecuting counsel, Ms Bukola Okeowo, told the court that the defendant committed the offence on March 23, 2023 in the White Sand Area of Ijora Badiya, Lagos.  
  
She said the defendant defiled the baby by having unlawful sexual intercourse with her and inflicting serious injuries to her vagina.