Arabic teacher denies sexually assaulting pupils, claims frame-up

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An Arabic teacher, Farouk Adam, aka Sadiq, on Wednesday, denied sexually assaulting nine of his pupils, saying he had never done such a thing in his life.  
  
The defendant is standing trial for sexual assault before Justice A.O. Soladoye of the Special Offences Court, Ikeja, Lagos State.  
  
The cleric, who taught in an Islamic school, said he had a disagreement with one Awawu, who subsequently accused him of sexually assaulting a minor.  
  
He said, “Awawu came to the school with the children of her neighbours. Later, the children started coming with their mothers. They were all learning in January 2020. In the first week of February, Awawu brought Zarawu to me to flog, saying she had been misbehaving and lied a lot, adding that whenever she was given tasks to do, including homework, she would refuse to do them and also avoided praying.”  
  
He said he initially refused to flog the girl, but when he perceived that Awawu had good intentions, he gave in to her request.  
  
“I ordered that the girl be brought to me. When she was brought to me, I held her hand and flogged her, then she fell and tried to run away. I had to ask the other children to hold her,” he added.  
  
Sadiq said two weeks after the incident, Awawu walked up to him and queried why he never bothered to ask after her and Zarawu.  
  
He said the woman rejected the explanation he gave.  
  
“She said I lied. So, I asked her why she accused me of lying. While the mothers and other children were seated, Awawu accused me of flogging Zarawu and also fingering her private parts,” he added.  
  
During cross-examination, the prosecuting counsel, Olusola Soneye, asked the defendant what his response was “when nine children told the police that you sexually assaulted them.”  
  
He also presented a statement allegedly made to the police by the defendant, who argued that he never signed it.  
  
“Yes, my statement was recorded. At that time, I was unconscious and I didn’t know what I was doing, so I answered all the questions in the affirmative,” the cleric said.  
  
The statement was admitted as Exhibit A amid objections by the defence counsel, Anthony Okonkwo, who stood on the grounds that Sadiq was unconscious as a result of the beating he received from the police.  
  
The case was adjourned till November 14 for the adoption of written addresses.