Arabic teacher jailed 21 years for attempted sexual assault of minor

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The Ikeja Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Court on Tuesday convicted and sentenced an Arabic teacher, Oladosu Sakiru, to 21 imprisonment for attempting to sexually assault a 13-year-old female pupil.  
  
The trial judge, Justice Rahman Oshodi, sentenced Sakiru following his guilty plea to the amended two counts of attempted sexual assault by penetration and indecent treatment of a child.  
  
Oshodi, in his judgment, reprimanded the convict for breaching the trust the parents of the survivor had in him for enrolling their children in the Islamic school.  
  
The judge held that the evidence before the court deduced a pattern of predatory behaviour as the convict subjected the survivor to inappropriate touching and forced himself on her.  
  
According to him, when the convict was confronted with his action, he sought refuge in the often-repeated phrase, “It was the work of the devil.”  
  
Oshodi held that religious leaders, and teachers such as the convict, held a sacred place in society and when such individuals broke the trust placed in them by preying upon children, the court must respond with appropriate severity to reflect society’s condemnation and deter others from committing similar acts.  
  
“As an imam and an Arabic school teacher, you occupy a position of significant trust, that trust extended not only to the 13-year-old child, the one you victimised but also to her parents and the entire community who look to you for spiritual and moral guidance.  
  
“You betrayed this trust in the most deplorable manner,” he said.  
  
However, the court sentenced Sakiru to 14 years imprisonment on count one and seven years jail term on count two.  
  
Oshodi held that the jail terms should run consecutively and that the convict’s name should be registered in the Lagos State Sexual Offences Register.  
  
Earlier, the defence counsel, Mr. Nelson Onyejaka, in his allocutus, prayed the court to temper justice with mercy.  
  
Onjejaka told the court that the convict was a first-time offender and that he had two wives to take care of.  
  
He prayed to the court for leniency in sentencing his client.  
  
The state prosecution counsel, Ms Bukola Okeowo, however, prayed the court to sentence the convict accordingly.  
  
Okeowo told the court that the convict committed the offences between February and March 2022, on Odusanmi Street, Mushin, Lagos.  
  
The convict had pleaded not guilty when he was initially arraigned on March 17, 2023.  
  
During the trial, the prosecution called two witnesses (the survivor and her father) through whom compelling evidence was given against the convict.  
  
The prosecution, however, approached the court on September 6, 2024, that the convict had opted for a plea bargain which necessitated the amended charge.  
  
According to the prosecution, the offences committed violated Sections 135 and 262 of the Criminal Laws of Lagos State, 2015.