Suspect bags N500,000 bail for alleged sexual assault in Imo

Date: 2025-06-03

Source: https://punchng.com/suspect-bags-n500000-bail-for-alleged-sexual-assault-in-imo/

An Owerri Magistrate Court on Tuesday granted N500,000 bail to a man, Emeka Ihekwugba, accused of having carnal knowledge of a 14-year-old girl in the Nkwerre area of Imo State.  
  
Ihekwugba, an abroad returnee, was arraigned by the police in the state before Magistrate Adaora Ariche on a two-count charge in Owerri, the state capital.  
  
The police in charge accused Ihekwugba of having carnal knowledge of the minor somewhere in Obinihu in the Nkwerre local government area of Imo State on April 24th, 2025.  
  
He was alleged to have taken the girl out of her mother’s custody and protection which is an offence punishable under section 225 of the Criminal Code “C38” laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004 as applicable in Imo state.  
  
The charge read “that you, Emeka Ihekwugba, male, on the 24th of April 2025, at about 1800hours ( 6pm) at Obinihu Nkwerre, triable in the Owerri magistrate District did with intent to have carnal knowledge of one ( name withheld) under the age of 18 years takes her out of her mother’s custody and protection or any other person having the lawful care or charge of her and thereby committed and offence punishable under section 225 of the Criminal Code “C38” laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004 as applicable in Imo state.  
  
“That you Emeka Ihekwugba, male, on the same date, time and place in the aforesaid magistrate District did have or attempted to have unlawful carnal knowledge of one (name withheld) female under the age of 18 years in your house against her wish and thereby committed an offence punishable under Section 221 of the Criminal Code C38 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004 as applicable in Imo State.”  
  
The charges were preferred against him by Samson Obodo, an Assistant Superintendent of Police, legal department of the Imo State Police Command.  
  
However, the suspect, Ihekwugba, pleaded not guilty to the two-count charge, while his lawyer applied for bail which the prosecution counsel did not oppose.  
  
Trial Magistrate, Adaora Ariche, in her ruling, granted the suspect N500,000 bail bond with a reliable surety resident within the jurisdiction of the court, two passport photos and a means of identification which must be submitted to the court.  
  
She thereafter adjourned the matter to July 1, 2025, and granted the application made by the state Ministry of Justice for the case file to be transferred to the Director of Public Prosecutions in the state.  
  
Some human rights groups that held watching briefs on the matter include the Imo State chapter of the International Federation of Women Lawyers and other civil rights organisations that announced appearances in the matter.  
  
Our correspondent learnt that the mother of the girl approached a human rights organisation, Stand For Humanity Foundation, to help her get justice for her assaulted daughter.  
  
She had on May 1, 2025, told the founder of the organisation, Chidiebube Okeoma, that a medical report from a police clinic in Owerri showed that her daughter was defiled.  
  
Okeoma had championed media advocacy that went viral, calling on the state Commissioner of Police, Aboki Danjuma, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Women Affairs, the wife of the Imo State Governor, Chioma Uzodimma and the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons to step in the matter and ensure justice was served.  
  
The minor had narrated how the accused allegedly lured her into his bedroom, drugged and subsequently defiled her.