THE HIGH COURT OF THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY IN THE ABUJA JUDICIAL DIVISION HOLDEN AT ABUJA, BEFORE HIS LORDSHIP: HON. JUSTICE MUHAMMAD S. IDRIS COURT: 28 DATE:-15TH MAY , 2023

FCT/HC/CR/489/2022

Between

COMMISSIONER OF POLICE------

COMPLAINANT

AND

- 1. UMAR MOHAMMED
- 2. IBRAHIM YUSUF

DEFENDANTS

JUDGMENT

The two Defendants were charged for committing the followingoffence namely: -

COUNT ONE

That you (1). Umar Mohammed and (2). Ibrahim Yusuf all Male, Adults, of Kuje FCT-Abuja, on or about the 3rd day of June, 2022at about 0930hours at Jeita Village, Kuje FCT-Abuja, within the Jurisdiction of this Honorable court, did conspired amongst your selves to commit an offence to wit: Armed Robbery. You thereby committed an offence punishable under Section 6 (a), (b), (c) of the Robbery and Firearm (Special Provisions) ACT. LFN 2004.

COUNT TWO

That you (1). Umar Mohammed and (2). Ibrahim Yusuf, all Male, Adults, of Kuje FCT-Abuja, on or about the 3rd day of June, 2022at about 0930 hours at Jeita, Village, Kuje Area Council, FCT-Abuja, within the Jurisdiction of this Honorable court, did commit the offence of Armed Robbery, in that while you were armed with offensive weapons, such as cutlasses and knives, you threatened to kill one Hussaini Aliyu Tukuma and forcefully carted away 37 Goats and Rams belonging to him. You thereby committed an offence punishable under Section 1 (2) (a) of the Robbery and Firearm (Special Provisions) ACT. LFN 2004.

COUNT THREE

That you (1). Umar Mohammed and (2). Ibrahim Yusuf all Male, Adults, of Kuje FCT-Abuja, on or about the 3rd day of June, 2022 at about 0930 hours at Jeita Village, Kuje Area Council, FCT-Abuja, within the Jurisdiction of this Honorable court did conspire amongst your selves to commit an offence to wit: culpable homicide punishable with death. You thereby committed an offence punishable under Section 97 (1) of the Penal Code Law.

COUNT FOUR

That you (1). Umar Mohammed and (2), Ibrahim Yusuf all Male, Adult, of Kuje Area Council, FCT-Abuja, on or about the 3rd day of June, 2022 at about 0930 hours at Jeita Village, Kuje Area Council FCT-Abuja, within the jurisdiction of this Honorable court, did cause the death of one Hussani Aliyu Tukuma, male, adult of Jeita Village, Kuje Area Council, FCT-Abuja, by attacking and striking him severally on the head and other parts of his body with Cutlass, knives and sticks, which caused him severe bodily injury and eventually led to his death, and you did so with the knowledge that his death would be the probable and not only a likely consequence of your act. You thereby committed an offence contrary to section 220 (a), (b) of the Penal Code Law and punishable under Section 221 of the same Law.

After the plea of the Defendants were duly taken by them having understood all the contents of all the 4 counts as contained on the charge sheets the Defendant denied having committed any of the offence as contained on the charge sheet. The prosecution open their case and called their PW1 while given evidence told this Court that the late Hussaini Aliyu Takuma was his brother. That the said Hussaini Aliyu Takuma left for his farm at Kuje where he nominally rear

His animals PW1 further testified that when they could not trace his whereabout and his handset was switch off therefore on 3rd June, 2022 PW1 went to Kuje police division and lodged a complaint. Police started conducting an investigation of the missing late Hussaini Takuma. Later the two Defendants were found in Kabusa village with some animals belonging to the deceased. The two Defendants when asked about the whereabout of the late Hussaini Takuma they replied that they do not know PW1 further testified that it was the 1st Defendant that normally take care of the animal belonging to the late Hussaini Takuma. He also informed this Court that it was the 1st Defendant that took care of the animal in KabusaKuje Area Council. On 9th June, 2022 PW1 said he received a call from Kuje Police division and was informed by the police that the 1st Defendant admitted killing the deceased with his brother. According to PW1 the 1stDefendant said that the corpse was put in an empty sack and tied the sack the 1st Defendant said they put the corpse inside a wheel barrow carried it and dumped it inside a well. He further (PW1) said the 1stDefendant around 6 clock took him and some police men to the said well the following day. Some of the officials of Civil Defence and fire service went and removed the corpse from the well. The corpse was removed from the sack in company of PW1 and some police men they took the corpse to kuje General Hospital where it was officially confirmed and certified that the said Hussaini Aliyu Takuma is dead. Same was shown to PW1 while at Kuje General hospital. PW1 according to him from the GeneralHospital went to the police and applied for the release of the corpse and same was released to him went back home and buried the said corpse in accordance with Islamic rites application for the

release of the corpse was admitted in evidence and marked as exhibit 1. During cross examination PW1 answered that he did not went to the farm with the late Hussaini Aliyu Takuma. But same PW1 answered that he was at the farm on the 3rd June, 2022 the same PW1 answered that he was not around when the whole incident took place. Prosecution called the 2nd witness PW2 said while testifying that he only know the 1st Defendant. PW2 said he the burial of his late brother who is at went to Zuba to attend Zuba.He was informed that the farm of late Hussaini Aliyu Takuma was left opened and nobody was around. PW2 proceeded to the farm with one of his friend neither the late Hussaini Aliyu Takuma nor any body was in the farm when he contacted the late Hussaini Aliyu Takuma on phone his handset was switch off and when he called his parent they told him that they were attending a burial of their relations. PW2 said he went to Shieta Village in Kabusa Area where he paid the sum of N15,000.00.

In order to search for the whereabout of the late Hussaini Aliyu Takuma he was told by those people when he paid that they saw some people with some animals and dog passing. PW1 now gave the commanderN15,000.00 while inside the bush searching they now saw the two Defendants with those animals they now proceeded to Sheita out post including the two Defendants and the animals recovered.

The O/C of Sheita out post called the DPO of Kabusa who instructed thatthey should all come to Kabusa Police Division which they did the total number of both the rams and goat were 38 one died out of the 38animals on that same day The following day the DPO gave them avehicle with one police man theynow wentand arrested the two Defendants. Whenthey came back the two Defendants refused to tell the truth. The following day while at the police station the 1stDefendant told the police that the late Hussaini Aliyu Takuma was killed by the three of them i.e the 1stDefendant, 2nd Defendant and

one now at large. The 1st Defendant took them to where they put and hide the handset of the late Hussaini Aliyu Takuma inside one block. PW2 said in company of some of the policemen they were able to recover the said handset. PW1 said he was worn by the 1st Defendant that if he is not careful he would also killed him.

PW2 said the two cows belonging to the late Hussaini Aliyu Takuma was under his control he also informed the Court that he worked as a supervisor to the later Hussaini Aliyu Takuma while 1stDefendant is a security guard of the later Hussaini Aliyu Takuma and the Defendant also took the animals sometimes for rearing. During cross examination PW2 said it was in company of some vigilante member that they were able to arrest the 1st Defendant PW2 also answered that he did not see the Defendants killing the late Hussaini Aliyu Takuma.

He also told this Court that he did not know the 2nd Defendant. PW3 also testified that on the 5th June, 2022 they received an information from DPO Kabusa who informed the DPO Kuje that the two Defendants were arrested with some rams and goats on their way from Kuje to Nasarawa State. While on the 4th June, 2022 one Hassan Zakari came to the police station and reported about the missing of their brother Hussaini Aliyu Takuma who left from his house at Jeita since then he never returns back home. PW3 said that they went to Kabusa Police Division where the two Defendants were handed over to them with 38 rams and 6 goats the animals were handed over to PW1 because according to PW3 they do not have place to keep them. Both the family of the deceased and the police suspect that that was a case of kidnapping sametherefore transferred the case to Anti kidnapping Department FCT command. On the 10th June, 2022 a teamof police from Anti kidnapping came to the station and told them that the deceased was not kidnapped. DPO of Kuje led the teams of Anti-Kidnapping Department and theirsurveillancepatrol proceeded to Jeitaopposite the farm owned by the deceased the two Defendants pointed at a well were the corpse was dumped by themselves.

It was very late on 11th June, 2022 PW3 said they went to the place where the dead body was dumped tied and put inside a sack the corpse was brought out from the well in the presence of Road Safety, Civil Defence, Fire Service and other sister agencies. The corpse was taken to Kuje General Hospital where PW1 identified the corpse of Hussaini Aliyu Takuma. After the application made by the family of the decease the corpse was released to them PW3, Inspector Rhode Onoja and Inspector Barnabas recorded the statement of the two defendant where they confirmed to have committed the offence. On 14th June, 2022 the suspects was transferred to CID for further investigation inspectorRhode speaks Idoma, Hausa and English while Inspector Barabas speaks Hausa and English very well. Accordingly, the following documents were admitted in evidence. Before admitting the document in evidence, the defence Counsel did not object but he only told the Court that the two Defendants did not make any statements to the police. The document admitted are: -

- 1. General form of affidavit deposed to by PW1 exhibit 2
- 2. Bond to produce dated 23rd June, 2022 exhibit 3
- 3. Statement of Umar Mohammed dated 11th June, 2022 exhibit 4
- 4. Statement of Ibrahim Yusuf 4th June, 2022 exhibit 5

During cross examination PW3 answered that he was not a member of Anti kidnapping Department. He also agreed that the two Defendants were handed over at Kabusa division PW3 agreed that he was not the one who arrested the two Defendants but he was the one who handed over the Defendants to the Anti kidnaping Department. While under cross examinationPW3 answered that he did not recorded the statement of the Defendants but he went further and said they work as a team. The statement of the witness PW3 was also recorded as exhibit 6. PW3 said exhibit 5 was written and signed on the 4th June, 2022 but said it was a mistake from the witness it was on 3th June, 2022.

Also PW3 said the defendants gave evidence in Hausa and both Inspector Rhode and Inspector Barnabas wrote in English. PW4 gave evidence on account of the role he played during investigation of this case. He recorded the statement of the complainant and that of the two Defendants under word of caution where they admitted killing the decease it was the 1st Defendant that took them to the place where the corpse was dumped and also where thephone was recovered owned by the decease PW4 also told this Court how 12 pictures of the decease and other relevant pictures, took. PW4 gave detail account on how the corpse was found.The statements were recorded in English. Later translated in Hausa. PW4 said he can speak 4 languages, Hausa, English, Igbo. The following documents were also admitted in evidence: -

- 1. referral sheet dated 11th June, 2022 exhibit 7 -12
- 2. Picture exhibit 8
- 3. Certificate of compliance exhibit 8A
- 4. Damaged phone exhibit 9
- 5. Statement of Umar Mohammed dated 14th June, 2022. Written in Hausa exhibit 10
- 6. English version of same dated 14th June, 2022 exhibit 10 A
- 7. While statement made by the 2nd Defendant Ibrahim Yusuf Hausa version dated 14th June, 2022 exhibit 11.
- 8. The English version of same exhibit 11A

The defence Counsel did not object to the admissibility of the abovementioned documents. PW4 under cross examination said he did not recover weapon neither was the Defendants transferred to the homicide FCT command section with any weapon apart from recording the statements of the suspect PW4 said he visited the scene of the crime. At all the time the statements made by a suspect must be sign or thumb print where he cannot write DW1 when giving evidence in his defence said it was alleged that he killed his boss and deposited the corpse inside a well. He said he only took care of his animal DW1 said when he was rearing the animal closed to the farm at that time the victim was not around DW1 said the 2nd defendant is his friend while they went together with the animal while they were grazing a team of vigilante members came and started asking where is his boss he replied them that his boss is not around that was how he was arrested and taken to the police station together with the 2nd Defendant. The place where they were rearing the animal was not far away from the farm house. DW1 said while at the police station they were seriously beating by the police that they can not be able to stand up. DW1 said that was not the first time he took the whole animals for grazing he always come back to the farm house according to him between 12noon and 3:oclork.

In the cause of police investigation, they found the dead body and that was how they said we were the one thatkilled Hussaini Aliyu Takuma(decease).During cross examination DW1 answered that he has been working with the decease for two months. And he only knows the 2nd Defendant not up to 2months, he does know the name of the gateman that guard the gate of the farm house. DW1 went further and told this Court that he only knows about the police when he was arrested. DW1 also answered yes it was when everything was explained to him that he now instructed the person to write his statement on his behalf.

DW2 while given evidence in chief he claimed not to have known anything regarding the killing. According to him his trade is nail cutting. DW2 said he met the 1st Defendant rearing the animals. DW1 asked him to cut his nail when DW2 replied him that he was tired. While they were discussing suddenly a team of vigilante surroundedthem he asked the 1st Defendant what happened 1st Defendant replied him that he does not know what happened they started beating them they took 1st Defendant to Jeita police station while the 2nd Defendant wastaken to JabiPolice Station. DW2 said he was seriously beaten to the extend he became unconscious and could not stand up after 5 days he was taken to Kuje police station where he met the 1st Defendant he replied the police consistently that hedoes not know anything about the case. Both the Defendant were taken to a cell at Jabi where they spent2 months later when the IPO sawthe legs of the 2nd Defendant swollen up gave him some drugs during cross examination DW2 said it was true that they were arrested by the vigilante members and DW2 said he was not taken to Kuje with the animals. He further said that he was taking to Kuje alone. DW2 said he was just passing when he met the 1st Defendant he did not pay him a visit. The Defendantshaving filed their final written address raise a sole issue for determination to wit:-

"Whether having regards to the totality of the evidence adduced before this Court and the provision of section 135 (1)(2)(3) of the Evidence Act 2011 the prosecution has successfully proved all the ingredients of the offence of conspiracy and actual crime to commit theft and culpable homicide punishable with death beyond reasonable doubt. In order to secure a conviction against the 1st and 2nd Defendants defence Counsel cited the case of **OSETOLA & ANOR VS STATE** (2012) LPELR 9548 SC the Court in a trial for conspiracy and where the indictment contains a substantive offence, the proper approach is to deal with the substantive charge first and decide the former bearing in mind the findings. On the later Counsel also cited 132 of the evidence Act."

" Theburden of proof in suit or proceeding lies on that person who would fail if no evidence at all were given on either side"

Counsel cited the case of PETER VS COP (2022) LPELR 56958 CA.

On the offence of theft against the 1st and 2nd Defendant same was brought under 286 Penal Code Law punishable under section 290 Penal code. The following key element must be provided: -

- 1. That the property in question is movable property
- 2. That the property was in thy possession of the person
- 3. That the accused person moved the property which while in possession of the person
- 4. That he did without the consent of the person
- 5. That he did so in order to take the property out of the possession of the person.
- 6. That he did so with the intent to cover his wrongful gain to himself or wrongful lost to that person. See *BABAGAM VS THE STATE 2020 LPELR*. From the above element the evidence of PW1 and 2 failed to provide the above ingredient as such Counsel urge the Court to resolve same in favour of the Defendants.

On the proof of conspiracy to commit theft to proof the above offence the prosecution needs to bring cogent and stray evidence in order for the Court at the end of the day may convict the Defendant if there is no defence see *SAIIDU VS STATE (2022)LPELR 57288 CA.* apart from showing that there was an agreement on the part of the 1st and 2nd Defendants to commit an unlawful act, there must be also evidence that the unlawful act was carried out by the Defendant. In this case the Defendant failed to give evidence that the lawful act was carried out see *ABIOYE& ORS VS STATE (1986) LPELR 20560 CA AFOLOLOR VS STATE (2017) LPELR 043825 SC*

On the offence of culpable homicide punishable with death. The ingredient as provided must strongly be proved see section 221 Penal code OKOROVS STATE OF LAGOS 92012) LPELR 57481 CA EMWENYA VS A.G BENDEL STATE (1993) LPELR 1137 SC.

No interpreter was called to give evidence in respect of the instant case against the Defendant with regards to the alleged confessional

statement. The document cannot be relied by the Court. The evidence of confessional statement alleged to have been made by the two Defendants can not be used by this Court. This is because same offendsthe provisions of the evidence Act see also **MUSA VS STATE (2018) LPELR 46**.finally, Counsel urge the Court to discharge and acquitthe two Defendants principally on the ground of lack of material evidence.The prosecution filed their final written address in opposition to the one filed by the defence which same raise the following issues for determination: -

Whether the prosecution has proved his case against the Defendant. In this case beyond reasonable doubt counsel insist that the prove required by the prosecution against the Defendant in any criminal trial is not proven beyond a shadow of doubt see ORE VS STATE (2020) LPELR 49554 CA. On the issue of conspiracy, it is important like in all crimes to prove the agreement between the parties express or implied beyond reasonable doubt because an inference or circumstantial evidence of an agreement suffices. See MJOVERN & ORS VS THE STATE (1973) LPELR 2042 SC. Counsel argued that the case of theft has been found against the two Defendants beyond reasonable. All the requirement have been established. The prosecution maintained that they have proof their Defendants by circumstantial against the evidence. case Circumstantial evidence is as good as sometimes better than any other sort of evidence and what it means by it is that there is a umber of circumstances which is a complete unbroken claim of evidence. See SUNDAY VS STATE (2019) 9 NWLR (pt1678) 115Q 132 (e)(F) ODUGUM VS STATE (2013) LPELR 4280 SC.

On the evidence of PW3 and 4 being investigating policeofficer in this case who gave evidence as to what they did that does not amount to hearsay. On the issue of the Witness Protection Act lack of literate jurat on them does not render them inadmissible see **JOHN VSTATE (2017) LPELR 48039 SC**.On whether a confessional

statement must be recorded in the language to which it is made, when the procedure employed to obtain a confessional statement will be held to be in order. See OGWU V STATE (20220) LPELR 5020 OLANIPOKU VS STATE (2016) LPELR 40440 SC. Finally, counsel urge the Court to so hold and convict them accordingly. I have reproduced substantially in this judgment the submission of the learned gentleman for and against. I am strongly of the view that our law on jurisprudence particularly dealing with criminal matter is basically accusatorial criminal justice System an accused is presumed innocent until the contrary is prove. See section 36 (5) of the 1999 Constitution as amended. I must state clearly in this judgment that from the evidence of the prosecution witnesses and the exhibits tendered aforesaid there is no direct evidence linking the Defendant with the said 4 count charge brought against the two Defendants. However, from the confessional statements of the Defendant as can be seen in this record is sufficient enough to warrant conviction against the two Defendants.

I must also state in this judgment when the prosecution applied to tender the confessional statement in evidence the learned defence Counsel do not object. However in the cause of defence the two Defendants told this Court that they were seriously beaten at that point that was too late to be raised. Therefore involuntarily obtainedstatement must be raised during the prosecution case. Therefore, the defenceraised by the two Defendant is nothing but an afterthought. Although the learned defence Counsel argued that the two Defendants told him that they did not make any statement to the police. The defence Counsel is not a witness therefore when an accused person denied ever making any statement to the police that would not prevent the Court from admitting the said statement in evidence. The issue of illiterate juratraised as a defence by the Defendants Counsel that cannot work the prosecution witness particularly PW4 gave graphic account on how the statement of the

Defendants was recorded. The construction of line of cross examination conducted by the defence left some vital question raised by the prosecution witness which the Defendants Counsel failed to cross examine especially on the discovering of corpse made by the police base on the information given by the 1st Defendant and the damage phone also made this Court to believe that the 1stDefendant actually participated or knowing fully well the consequence of his action. It is pertinent to state in this judgment that all the prosecution witnesses graphically told this Court the involvement of the 1st Defendant particularly this can be seen from the evidence of PW1 2,3and 4. The involvement of the 2ndDefendant in this circumstance is only linked to the offence of conspiracy and theft this was basically on the ground of his confessional statement. The 36 rams and 6 goats which is the alleged subject of theft are moveable property. They were in the possession of the deceased at his farm in Kuje, the Defendant removed them while in the possession of the decease and -did so after the decease was killed tied inside the sack and thrown into a well. That the Defendants did so with the intention of depriving the decease the ownership, they were arrested with the animals on their way to Nasarawa state . the law is settled beyond peradventure that in the absence of direct evidence the prosecution can also prove its case by circumstantial evidence against the Defendants just like this case before the Court. Even though the prosecution did not adduce evidence of an eye witness linking the 1st Defendants to the killing of the deceased in this case, but the prosecution can prove by circumstantial evidence it supposes in law. See UGHANWA VS IGP (2012) LPERL 5281 CA circumstantial evidence is as good as sometimes better than any other sort of evidence and what is meant by it is that there is a number of circumstances which is a complete unbroken chain of evidence. See STATE VS SUNDAY (2019) 9 NWLR (PT 1676) 115 q 132 (C) (f), under our criminal jurisprudence circumstantial evidence is defined as evidence of similar circumstance which by undersigned

coincidence is capable of proving a preposition withmathematical exaltation and that where direct evidence is unavailablewhich is cogent circumstantial evidence compelling and point irresistibly and unequivocally to the guilt of the accused is admissible to sustain a conviction. The defence Counsel raised a reason that the prosecution failed to tender a medical report and weapon used in the cause of investigation the law has developed beyond that argument it is now settled that the prosecution need not tender the medical report showing cause of death in a case of culpable homicide punishable with death before it can grant conviction against a Defendant see WOWEA VS STATE (2021) LPELR 53384 SC IDEMUDIS VS STATE (1999) LPELR 1418 SC BASIE AKPA VS STATE (2008) LPELR 358 (SC). The 4 prosecution witnesses have discharged the burden of proof beyond reasonable doubt placed on the prosecution see **CHUKWU** VS STATE (1992) LPELR 854 (SC). It is also the law that failure to tender the weapon used in committing the crime will not be fatal. This is because of the possibility of the accused person doing away with the offensive weapon or any other thing used after the commission of the offence in order of exonerate himselffrom criminal responsibility see CHUKWUYERE VS STATE (2017) LPELR 43725 SC all the exhibitstendered I relied on same. As a matter of law it is firmly established that the burden of proof of guilt of the accused in every criminal trial remains on the prosecution and it makes no difference if the guilt is being substantiated by the prosecution in reliance on eye witness evidence or on circumstantial evidence see STATE VS JOHN OGBUNYI & ORS (2001)2 NJSC 145 OLAWAYI RAHEEN VS ELDER DAVID (2012) LPELR 7879. Generally, there is no duty on the accused to prove his innocence circumstance may however arise where some explanation may be required from the accused such as where apparently damaging circumstance are established against the accused see ADEYU VS STATE (1998) 9 NWLR (PT 565) 185. Having critically analyzed the entire position of both counsel in this judgment substantially. I can now safely conclude in this judgment

that the prosecution has proved the case of conspiracy under section 97 of Penal Code law and theft under section 286 of the Penal Code against the 1st and 2nd Defendant I therefore convict them accordingly whether on the count of murder pursuant to section221of Penal Code Law the 1stDefendant is hereby convicted as charged. This judgment was based on confessional statement and circumstantial evidence on the exhibits tendered in the cause of this trial I would also add that an interpreter by name Sulieman Takuma interpreted the proceedings throughout the trial.

Consequently, having carefully recorded the plea made on-behalf of the 1st and 2nd convict, I quite agreed with the reason advanced I therefore in the interest of justice that you Umar Mohammed and Ibrahim Yusuf are hereby sentence to 3 months imprisonment, this is inline with section 97(2) of the Penal Code Law, in respect of the offence of theft you Umar Mohammed and Ibrahim Yusuf are hereby sentence to two (2) Years imprisonment this is in line with section 287 Penal Code Law and you Umar Mohammed I hereby sentence you to death by hanging this is in line with section 221 of the Penal Code Law. The sentences with the exception of the last one against the 1st convict shall run consecutively.

> HON. JUSTICE M.S IDRIS (Presiding Judge)

Appearance

1st Defendant in Court

2nd Defendant in Court

AdamaMusa:- For the prosecution

Dennis Abu:- For the Defendants