

Forty five cases to be heard by ECOWAS Court in first quarter of 2016

Forty five cases from 10 Member States have been scheduled for the first quarter of 2016 by the Community Court of Justice, ECOWAS between February and April 2016, according to the records provided by the Registry Department of the Court.

The court will deliver judgements in five of the cases, give rulings on three others while the rest of the cases are for hearing. Three of the judgements will be delivered on 16th February 2016

Most of the cases are from human rights violations against Member States.

They include those filed by retired Colonel Mohammed Sambo Dasuki, the National Security Adviser to former Nigerian President, Dr Goodluck Jonathan and another by Djibril Bassole, who served as foreign minister under former President Blaise Compaore. Both of them have approached the court for the enforcement of their fundamental human rights.

Hearing in case no ECW/CCJ/APP/01/16 filed by Col. Dasuki has been fixed for 15th March 2016 while that filed by the former foreign minister of Burkina Faso in case no.ECW/CCJ/APP/03/16 been fixed for 18th March 2016

In another of the cases due to be heard during this first quarter, Dorothy Chioma Njemanze and three others are in suit no ECW/CCJ/APP/17/14 suing the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, alleging that they were arbitrarily abducted, detained and assaulted sexually, verbally and physically at different times between January 2010 and March 2013.

They alleged that the agents of the government of Nigeria comprising the Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB), the Nigerian Police, and the Nigerian Military subjected them to gender-based violence and inhuman and degrading treatment contrary to the provisions of various international legal instruments.

They also cited the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) among the instruments violated by the government.

The matter has been slated for continuation of hearing on 18th March 2016.

In another case, a Nigerian, Mr Obioma C.O. Ogukwe whose 15 year old son died in a swimming incident on 15th October 2016 is suing the government of Ghana in suit number ECW/CCJ/APP/12/14 alleging the violation of his fundamental rights as enshrined in relevant sections of various international legal instruments by its failure to

carry out a proper investigation and prosecution of person(s) found guilty for the alleged murder of his son.

The plaintiff submitted that the schoolmaster had taken his son in company of other students out for jogging that ended at the beach where the schoolmaster invited the students to swim. However, his son declined the schoolmaster's invitation to swim, opting instead to play a game on phone. The boy lost his life thereafter in controversial circumstances.

Hearing in the case continues on 18th March 2016.

The cases will be heard by different panel of judges drawn from the present Members of the Court, which include Hon. Justice Maria Do Céu Silva Monteiro (President), Hon. Justice Chijioke Friday Nwoke (Vice President), and Hon. Justice Jérôme Traoré (Dean).

Other Members of the Court are Hon. Justice Micah Wilkins Wright, Hon. Justice Yaya Boiro, Hon. Justice Hameye Founé Mahalmandane, and Hon. Justice Alioune Sall.