

FG Arraigns Nigerian Leader of Al-Qaeda in Court (back)

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The Federal Government yesterday arraigned a 40-year old Nigerian leader of an illegal terrorist organization called Al-Qaeda Network, one Mallam Mohammed Ashafa before a Federal high court sitting in Abuja .

Mohammed's terrorist group specializes in gathering information and carrying out terrorist attacks on the residences of Americans living in Nigeria .

He is facing a 5-count charge of receiving monies in foreign currencies from Talha and Na'im (Al-Qaeda Operatives) of the Tabligh Headquarters, Lahore , Pakistan for the recruiting and training of terrorists whose main objective is to attack residences of Americans living in Nigeria .

He was not represented by any lawyer in court.

The first attempt to arraign him in court early yesterday morning was frustrated by him.

He had told the trial judge, Justice Binta Murtala Nyarko that he did not understand English, the official language of the court.

Justice Nyarko who is presently the administrative judge of the Abuja division of the Federal high court had to stand down the case till 2:00pm yesterday to enable the court get a good interpreter.

Mohammed, a young man of about 5.4 feet height, who wore a very bushy hair was taken away by men of the SSS after the matter was stood down.

He was brought back to court yesterday at exactly 2:00clock and he was docked again with the charges interpreted to him in Hausa language.

He pleaded not guilty to each of the counts.

But moments after entering his pleas, Mohammed surprised everybody in court when he started speaking fluently in English Language with the men of the SSS that brought him to court.

Earlier, the trial judge had asked Mohammed if he would defend himself or engage the services of a legal practitioner of his choice to which he replied that he would engage a counsel of his choice.

Justice Nyarko who said he was entitled to legal representation however ordered that he be remanded in SSS custody till February 22, this year when trial is expected to commence in his case.

The judge also ordered that he should be given both visitation and medical rights, saying it is only the living that can face trial.

shall be used to identify and carry out terrorist attacks on the residence of Americans living in Nigeria and thereby commit an offence contrary to section 15 (1) of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment) Act 2004 and punishable under the same section of the Act.

COUNT 2:

That you Mohammed Ashafa 40 years old of Sharanchi Quarters Kano on diverse dates (between 2003 and December 2004) at Kano, Kano State within the jurisdiction of the Federal High Court facilitated acts of terrorism: to wit you are served courier to Al-Qaeda Tabliqh Headquarters Lahore Pakistan receiving and decoding coded messages and disseminating same to members of an illegal terrorist organisation known and called 'The Nigerian Taliban' with intent that such information to identify and carry out attacks on residence of Americans living in Nigeria and thereby committed an offence contrary to section 15 (3) of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment) Act 2004 punishable under the same section of the Act.

COUNT 3:

That you Mohammed Ashafa 40 years old of Sharanchi Quarters, Kano, member of an illegal organisation known and called the 'Al-Qaeda networks' at Kano, Kano state within the jurisdiction of the Federal high Court permitted your house to be used as the Al-Qaeda secret operational base; and rendered logistics and intelligence services to Adhan Katal Spinghul, Ahamed Sukur, Ahamed Taifi, Babagana Abdul Karim Gatamari (members of terrorist organisation called 'The Al-Qaeda Networks' whose objectives was to identify and carry out attacks on the United States Consulate and residences of Americans living in Nigeria and thereby commit an offence contrary to section 15 (3) of the Economic and Financial Crimes

Commission (Establishment) Act 2004 punishable under the same section of the Act.

COUNT 4:

That you Mohammed Ashafa â€˜Mâ€™™ 40 years old of Sharanchi Quarters, Kano, member of an illegal terrorist organisation known and called the Nigerian Taliban on diverse dates, (between the 30th December 2003 and 30th December, 2004 at Maiduguri, Borno State and other places in Nigeria within the jurisdiction of the Federal High Court did facilitate the commission of terrorist act to wit: You contacted, sponsored and ferried Isam Adam Sukur, Ahamed Taifi, Babagana Abdulkarim Galtamari and eighteen other Mujahideen fighters (members of Militia arm of the said Nigerian Taliban) to receive combat training on terrorism from an Algerian terrorist network known as Salafis Group for combat and preaching camp at Agwan, Niger Republic (Algerian Terrorist Network) and thereby committed an offence contrary to section 15 (2) of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment) Act 2004 and punishable under the same Act.

COUNT 5

That you Mohammed Ashafa â€˜Mâ€™™ 40 years old of Sharanchi Quarters, Kano, member of an illegal terrorist organisation known and called 'The Nigerian Taliban' on or about 30th day of December 2003 at Yau Katako quarters Kano, Kano State within the jurisdiction of the Federal high Court provided and gave large sums of money to Isam Adam Sukur and Ahamed Taifi with the intent that the money shall be used to receive military training at Salafis Group for combat and preaching at Camp Agwan Niger Republic and that you thereby committed an offence contrary to section 15 (1) of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment) Act punishable under the same section of the Act.