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Law

Court Convicts Vietnamese For Trafficking In Pangolin Scales

📅 October 31, 2022 👤 Akeem Nafiu 💬 Comments Off

Justice Daniel Osiagor of a Federal High Court in Lagos has convicted a Vietnamese, Nguyen Huy, who was arraigned by the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) of trafficking in 200kg of Pangolin scales.

The judge sentenced Nguyen to 3 months imprisonment after he pleaded guilty to two counts charge preferred against him by the NCS. The convict was brought before the court on charges of acting in contravention of Nigeria Customs and Excise Management Act and unlawful possession of Pangolin scales, a specimen specified in the First Schedule to the Endangered Species Act.

The convicted Vietnamese and others were brought before the court after the they were arrested by Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) and Wildlife Justice Commission(WJC), a joint wildlife enforcement operations, targeting illegal wildlife traffickers of Pangolin scales from Africa to Asia.

Upon his guilty plea, the prosecutor, Mrs. Onyeka Ohakwe, thereafter reviewed the facts of the charge and tendered some exhibits which were admitted by the court. She also urged the court to convict Nguyen as charged and also to sentence him in consonance with the sections of Customs Act upon which he was charged

In his plea for leniency, the convict's lawyer, Okey Mgbobukwa, urged the court to tamper justice with mercy in sentencing his client, saying the convict promptly owned up to the offence without wasting the court's time. In his judgement, Justice Osiagor, after listening to parties' submissions, sentenced the convict to 3 months imprisonment on each of the counts.

The judge also ordered that the sentence shall run concurrently and to commence from the date of his arrest. At the hearing of the charges against the convict, the prosecutor informed the court that the Vietnamese and others, who are his compatriots, but now at large, committed the offences on May 9, 2022, at Chicken Republic restaurant, Marina, Lagos State.

The prosecutor also informed the court that the defendant was unlawfully in possession of 200kg of the pangolin scales. She disclosed that the offences committed by the convict contravened Section 64 of the Customs and Excise Management Act, 2004 and thereby committed an offence contrary to and punishable under Section 166 of the Customs and Excise Management Act, Cap. C45, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004, as well as Section 5(1) of the Endangered Species (Control of International Trade and Traffic) Act, 2004 and punishable under Section 5(1)(a) of the same Act



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