

By Ibrahim Usman

The Court of Appeal Sokoto Judicial Division has on July 2, 2015 discharged and acquitted 112 members of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria led by Shaikh Ibraheem Zakzaky of any offence, in a case between Malam Kasimu Muhammad Umar and 111 others and Commissioner of Police, Sokoto State.

It would be recalled that sometimes in July 2007 hired thugs by Sokoto state government and its apparatus under Alu Wammako attacked and killed 6 members, while their homes and property worth millions of naira were destroyed.

As a result, disciple of Shaikh Zakzaky in Sokoto, Malam Kasimu Umar was arrested along with 111 others and charged with murder and sentenced to 10 years prison terms each, across different prisons the country.

After intense court battle, on 28th September, 2010, the court hearing the case released the accused persons for lack of substantive evidence linking them to the murder charge, but other charges remained.

The accused persons were subsequently released because they have overstayed their prison terms.

Counsel to the accused persons later filed an appeal at the Sokoto Appeal Court which completely reviewed the case and finally discharged and acquitted the accused persons on July 2, 2015.

The court verdict signed by Justice Paul A. Galinje, Justice Tunde O. Awotoye and Justice Muhammed L. Shuaibu, decried the hasty decision of the lower court in 2007 and the refusal to allow appeal by the accused persons, which denied them fair hearing.

The three judges unanimously resolved that, “This appeal shall be and is hereby allowed. The lower court decision is hereby set aside and quashed”.

Commenting on the court verdict on behalf other the other accused persons, Malam Kasimu Umar expressed satisfaction, which he said was the triumph of truth over falsehood.