

# Officers arrested as suspect dies during interrogation



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Some residents in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State have the death of a middle aged man, Wisdom Akobundu, in police custody.

*The Nation* learnt that in an attempt to stop the angry youths from gaining entry into the police station, the police personnel resorted to shooting sporadically into the air to scare the youths away.

This forced some shop owners around the area to close abruptly.

Commissioner of Police (CP), Danladi Isa, while sympathising with the Bende people over the unfortunate incident, said that the policemen involved in the act have been arrested and handed over to the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID) in Umuahia.

CP Isa stated that the command would charge those found culpable to the court as soon as investigation was concluded.

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Chairman of Bende Local Government Area, Deacon Uwabunkonye Bassey, expressed deep shock and sadness over the death of Akobundu.

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One of the protesters who spoke to journalists alleged that the deceased, Akobundu, was invited for questioning by a yet-to-be identified policeman over a case involving theft of property.

According to the source who pleaded anonymous, Akobundu was accused of buying stolen property from scavengers.

It was learnt that Akobundu slumped after the police team brutalised him during interrogation.

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He was rushed to the Federal Medical Centre (FMC), Umuahia, where he was pronounced dead.

The youths trooped to the police station to demand justice for the deceased.

An elder brother of the deceased, Okorie Festus, expressed “deep pain and anger over the cruel and conspired death of my brother in police custody.

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“Evans Onyeka, a police officer, invited my brother to the Bende Police Station and he went there alive, strong, and without trouble. Hours later, we were told he was dead.

“Let it be known: the story being circulated by the police is false. My brother had never been involved in any police case or admitted to any hospital before this tragedy.

“I was called and told my brother was in police custody, but before I got there, they had already taken him to the hospital without any notice to me or any member of our family.

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“More painfully, from what we’ve gathered and seen, the whole scene clearly shows that my brother, Ako, died right inside the police station before they hurriedly went to get a bus to take him to the hospital. Any attempt to twist or hide this story will not stand.

“Officers Evans and Austin, who served in Bende for long and know both of us, very well, were there. Yet, they never called me or any of my family members. That silence is suspicious.

“We demand answers. The DPO, DCO, Inspector Evans, Austin, and every officer on duty that day must tell us what killed Ako my brother, my blood, a peaceful and responsible young man. They should not cover this. The truth must come out, and justice must be served.”