

Benue mob tortures 2 elders to death over witchcraft claim

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Two elderly men have been tortured to death by a mob in Gwer East LGA of Benue State following witchcraft allegations levelled against them.

Witnesses said the deceased, Kwaghange Ugbu and Atuur Shaaaja, were beaten by the mob and dragged with a rope on the ground around the town until they died.

A witness, who pleaded anonymity, told our correspondent that the incident happened on September 28, after one David Terseer Nongobo, a native of Mbaaku Mbasombo, slumped while working on the farm.

The witness said Nongobo, who recently completed his secondary education, was rushed to the village hospital where the medics confirmed him dead.

The witness narrated



■ Gov Samuel Ortom

further that when the news of the young school leaver broke in his community, some youths allegedly mobilised to the home of the two elderly men - who are relatives of the dead boy - and accused them of killing him through witchcraft.

"That was how they started beating and cutting the two elderly men with cutlasses and axes.

"They even tied a rope around their necks and dragged them until they died. They were screaming in their Tiv dialect that they don't have a hand in the young man's death but the mob didn't listen to

them.

"Even some members of the tortured victims' families including their children tried to rescue them while they were being unjustly treated but their attempts were resisted.

"The men eventually gave up the ghost and the mob ensured no one went close to their dead bodies which were left unattended to until the next day when their corpses were taken to the morgue," the witness added.

Our correspondent reports that cases involving the killing of some people over witchcraft allegations are on the increase in the state as a similar incident happened recently in Shangev Tiev community of Konshisha LGA of the state.

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) for Benue Command, SP Catherine Anene, confirmed the incident and said the

suspects were on the run.

Anene said, "That incident is confirmed. Suspects are on the run. The boy died mysteriously in the farm so some youths said it was his father and the uncle that killed him through witchcraft.

"They now beat up those two men up until they died alleging that they killed the boy through witchcraft. It has become an issue in Benue that they need to be enlightened.

"In the villages, those things happen and we have been talking to them and charged many to court.

"In fact, I'm trying to do a programme about that on radio and television so that they will get to know more that there is room for investigating such cases and establishing the cause of death and not for them to just assume that it's witchcraft.

"There are lots of factors which could lead to death; we have such cases (witchcraft allegations) in court."

Govs, others to brainstorm on PHC financing in states

the meeting was to develop a