

Metro

Father kills four children, sets home ablaze, hangs self in Rivers

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• Tiv community head kills policeman, buries body over N120,000 debt in Ogun

It was a horrific scene of the bizarre yesterday at Alesa, near Port Harcourt, in Eleme Local Government Area of Rivers State, when a 35-year-old man, Mr. Achibong Patrick, killed his four sleeping children after chasing his wife away with cutlass, set his house ablaze and hanged himself.

The four children were three girls and a boy, aged eight, five and three. The intervention of neighbours saved the building from being razed down by fire.

The incident happened at about 1:00a.m. when the escaping wife raised the alarm that her husband, who hailed from Ogoja in Cross River State, wanted to kill her and their children, but before neighbours could move to the two-room apartment, it was too late for the four children as the deed had been done. The children, who were asleep, were strangled to death, giving them no chance of fleeing to safety.



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A neighbour, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, revealed that the man was notorious for always beating his wife of many years, adding that yesterday's tragic incident may have been caused by the husband getting wind of moves by his frustrated wife to seek divorce.

The source disclosed that when the wife returned home, she saw the dead bodies of all the members of her family, with the burnt house, and almost ran mad, but for sympathisers who came to her rescue, held her down before whisking her away to an unknown destination. The bodies were later evacuated by policemen and deposited in the morgue of an undisclosed hospital.

The Rivers State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Nnamdi Omoni, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), confirmed the incident. When asked if any arrest had been made, he said: "Who are you going to arrest, when the man chased away his wife, before killing their four children? He did not stop at killing the children, but he decided to set his house ablaze, before hanging himself."

Omoni added that the landlord of the house where Patrick and his family lived, whom he simply identified as Gomba, reported the incident to a police station in the area. "The bodies of the five persons have been sent to the mortuary for autopsy. The reason for the action has not been ascertained but the police is still investigating the matter."

Meanwhile, a 30-year-old suspect, Jonathan Tsekar, has been arrested by men of the Ogun State police command for an alleged murder of a police corporal, Gbenga Adebeyejo, over N120,000 debt. Tsekar, until his arrest, was the leader of the Tiv community in Opeji, Odeda local government area of the State and was said to be a business partner to the deceased.



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Illyasu said upon report by the deceased's father, Joseph Adeboyejo, at Oueda Police Station, the police began investigation, leading to the arrest of the suspect. "After serious investigation and forensic analysis, the community leader was arrested."

Tracing how the deceased was killed, Illyasu said the suspect confessed to killing the police corporal by hitting him on the head with a heavy plank of wood in order not to refund a sum of N120,000, which he collected from the deceased.

"On December 1, Joseph Adeboyejo reported that his son visited him in Ilorin and explained a charcoal business he was doing with one leader of the Tiv community in Opeji village. While his son was with him, he received a call from the suspect informing him that his charcoal was ready, consequent upon which he left Ilorin to meet the man. He added that his son called him on phone when he reached the suspect's house but after some time he couldn't reach him or hear from him again.

"This is not only wicked and callous but also a superlative degree of effrontery because the suspect knows very well the status of the deceased," the police boss said.

Upon thorough investigation, led by the Divisional Police Officer (DPO), Baba Mohammed, the suspect was arrested. The suspect, while speaking to journalists, regretted killing the deceased, alleging that the policeman attacked him first.

According to him, "the deceased complained that the supply of his goods were delaying and we started arguing. He struck me with wood and I also struck him with wood. I didn't intend to kill him. When I realised he was dead, I dug a grave to bury him."

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