

Suspected armed robbers burnt to death in A'Ibom

From Inemesit Akpan-Nsoh, Uyo

FOUR suspected armed robbers were on Tuesday night burnt to ashes while trying to rob a pregnant woman at Abak road Boulevard, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State capital. An eyewitness said the incident occurred at about 9:00p.m. when the pregnant woman was surrounded by the robbers as soon as she got down from a motorcycle.

Though the rider had, according to the eyewitness, driven off after dropping his passenger, he immediately turned back when he heard the scream of the pregnant woman he had just dropped off.

The eyewitness, who refused to mention his name, said two of the robbers on sighting the okada rider, fled after they had successfully dispossessed the lady of her valuable items, while the other two were not so lucky.

Another eyewitness who also pleaded for anonymity said the agitated motorcyclist immediately alerted others and engaged the robbers before rescuing the woman, who had sustained a severe hand injury, from their grip.

"Luck ran out of two of the robbers when they were overpowered by the men who had gathered. They

were beaten, stoned with anything in sight and locked up in a nearby tunnel before setting them ablaze," the eyewitness recounted.

A resident of the area, Mrs. Arit Archibong, regretted that the flyover area has been a den of criminals for so many years, adding that about four rape cases were reported within the tunnel in December last year. Other residents who spoke with newsmen blamed the crime on the blackout and lack of security in the area.

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Akwa Ibom State Command, SP Odiko Macdon, frowned at such jungle

justice, stressing that such act has no place in law. "It is unfortunate that they were already set ablaze before we got there. Jungle justice has no place in the law. Every accused is innocent until proven guilty by the law."

The PPRO, who cautioned that the command would no longer tolerate such acts, declared that it was better for nine thieves to be allowed to go unpunished than for one innocent person to be killed in error. "We have liaised with the state waste management authority to evacuate the bodies while investigations are ongoing to unravel those behind the act," he said.

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