

Man burnt to death for stealing chicken in Calabar

By Agosi Todo, Calabar

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A young man simply identified as Victor yesterday transited to the world beyond the most horrifying death. He was set ablaze by an angry mob at Abitu Avenue in Calabar South, Cross River. Photo: PIXABAY



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A young man simply identified as Victor yesterday transited to the world beyond the most horrifying death. He was set ablaze by an angry mob at Abitu Avenue in Calabar South, Cross River for stealing a chicken.

Victor was caught in the early hours of yesterday while stealing a chicken at Abitu Avenue, by Ekpo Edem Street. It was gathered that before meeting his untimely death, he had been part of a criminal gang terrorizing the neighborhood and involving in petty stealing like theft of car batteries.

An eyewitness, George Asuquo, who spoke to newsmen, said: “The victim has been in the habit of stealing things like car batteries, generating sets and livestock including chickens in the neighborhood but residents have become wiser.

“He never knew that word has gotten out about his illicit activities in the area. Although when he was caught last year by some vigilance group members, he was given the last warning which he obviously did not heed to.

“He came as usual in the early hours of Tuesday to steal some chicken but the chicken started making noise and alerted people to the presence of an intruder in the neighbourhood. The people mobilised and laid siege for him. He was apprehended at about 4:00 a.m. The people refused to let him off the hook this time, hence the reason



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why they didn't wait too long or handing him over to the police before beating him up and setting him ablaze for the fowl he stole."

Another eyewitness, Eyo Akpan, said the victim was in the habit of petty stealing and constantly harassing residents in the area and in the process had maimed some people. Akpan said luck ran out on the young man when a vigilance group caught him running with a bag full of fowls suspected to have been stolen from a nearby poultry farm.

When confronted, Victor challenged them and brought out a machete and a big hammer to attack them. But the vigilante shouted for help and when other people arrived at the scene, they mobbed the suspect.

Akpan said: "The victim has been a notorious criminal and a leader of one of the gangs that extorts money and collects illegal tickets. Besides, he had stolen items such car battery and radios, generators and livestock within the neighbourhood. Most times residents were afraid of confronting him. But we prayed that one day he would meet his Waterloo.

"Last year, he was caught by a group of boys coming back from fishing but the vigilante intervened and got him freed. Then he was warned to desist from his criminal activities. But he came as usual in the early hours of Tuesday to steal some fowls and on his way out of the street, the fowls started making noise which attracted some members of the vigilance team.

"Realising that some people were after him, he attempted to escape and even brought out a big hammer before he was rounded up by the youths who refused to let him go this time. For fear that his gang could launch a counteroffensive to free him, they hurriedly beat him up and set him ablaze for stealing fowls," Akpan stated.



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When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Irene Ugbo, confirmed that she had been called by a resident informing her that somebody was lynched. She said the DPO of Calabar South had not briefed her officially and therefore cannot give details of the incident, regretting the recurrence of such a barbaric act.

Irene had, in a public enlightenment campaign, warned members of the public to desist from taking laws into their hands, advising them to always hand over suspects to the police for further investigation.

She said: "Though police do not support criminals and criminal activities in any way, it is high time we stopped this jungle justice which is against the law.

"We are not supporting criminals and their activities, but people must understand that jungle justice is against the law. They should hand over suspects to the police for further investigation and prosecution," she maintained.

