

Mob Sets Man Ablaze Over Attempt To Steal Bike In A'Ibom

By **Idongesit Ashameri** - July 19, 2018



Uyo – An irate mob in Urua Ekpa junction, Uyo, the Akwa Ibom State capital, within the week set a young man young man, suspected to be in his 30s, ablaze and burnt him to ashes over alleged attempt to steal a motorcycle.

Jungle justice as bizarre as it sounds has, however, become the stock in trade for mob around the Urua Ekpa and Calabar Itu axis of the state capital to surround criminals caught in the act, and reduce them to ashes after thorough beatings.

An effort to identify the young man was futile as he was burnt beyond recognition.

However, residents of the area who spoke with DAILY INDEPENDENT said his identity could not be ascertained by onlookers that saw him before he was set ablaze.

The source, however, said that the motorcycle thief confessed to having come from Ibiono Ibom Local Government Area before the mob snuffed the life out of him.

The eyewitness and tricycle operator, Mr Inyang Akpan said the victim from his confession admitted to having recorded several successes in the snatching of motorbikes from their owners.



"I was inside my Keke when the incident happened. A motorcyclist dropped a passenger at the junction and decided to enter somewhere to eat. The motorcycle thief may have been observing him. As he was trying to escape with the motorcycle, the owner spotted him and raised an alarm that attracted youths in the area that helped in apprehending him.

"Theft of motorcycle around this junction has become a regular occurrence. The young man has been coming to the junction to steal motorcycle successfully but that day he was not so lucky. So immediately they brought tyre and hanged it on his neck and subsequently set him ablaze.

He added: "I think the residents have been planning for some time now to catch get him arrested because he robbed so many motorcyclist operators of their means of livelihood by stealing their motorcycles".

According to her, actions of the mob might be as a result of the mistrust in the police for fear of releasing criminals caught in the act after being handed over for prosecution only to commit the same offence again and again.

"I know we have had several issues with motorcycle snatching and theft lately, but I do not support jungle justice in any way. Many suggested the need to hand the young man over to the police, the fear that he might either escape or be released by the police to return to terrorize the people again forced the angry youths to insist on setting him ablaze," she said.

Confirming the incident, the Police Public Relations Officer, Mr Odiko Macdon said the information the Police received was that the residents had laid a siege for the serial motorcycle thief and caught him.

Macdon regretted that the youths took laws into their hands instead of handing over the criminal to the police after he was caught for prosecution, stressing that the law kicks against jungle justice.

His words "Jungle justice is what we don't encourage. We have always advocated that members of the public should desist from such act. Let us avoid it totally because there are situations where an innocent person may be lynched. Whenever a criminal is caught, the person should be handed over to the police".

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