

# Man To Die By Hanging For Killing Brother Over Alleged Witchcraft

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An Akwa Ibom State High Court sitting in Uyo, the state capital has sentenced a 29-year-old man, Akaninyene Thomas Okpon, to death by hanging.

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The convict, according to the particulars of the case, killed his elder brother, Friday Thomas Okpon, whom he accused of being a witch and was responsible for his poverty and misfortune.

The incident occurred on April 8, 2018, at Ikot Abasi Asutan community in Ibesikpo Asutan local government area.

Akaninyene, a father of three children, the court said committed the act in connivance with his late brother, Ime Thomas Okpon, 37, who died in custody before the conclusion of the trial.

“The two siblings ambushed their elder brother in the bush track popularly called Usung Atan in Ikot Abasi Asutan farmland, where he had gone to check his hunting traps, butchered him with machetes, beheaded him, and buried the head separately away from other remains, in a shocking act that devastated the community,” the court said.

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Delivering his judgment in suit number: HU/5C/2019, the trial judge, Justice Okon Okon, held that the prosecution had established the facts of the case beyond all reasonable doubt, relying on the defendant's confessional statements and other corroborating evidence.

The court noted that the defendant, a primary three drop-out, had earlier issued threats to eliminate the deceased and others in the family and later led the police to the crime scene where the remains of the deceased were recovered.

Consequently, Justice Okon handed out his verdict thus: "The sentence of the court upon you, Akaninyene Thomas Okpon, is that you be hanged by the neck until you are dead."

The judge also ordered the forfeiture of the murder weapons of two machetes marked as Exhibits 1–1A to the state government.