

32-year-old man stabbed to death in electricity bill row



• The late Francis

A 32-year-old welder, Sunday Francis, has died after he was allegedly stabbed during a scuffle with two men over non-payment of electricity reconnection levy.

The incident occurred at Oke-Alafia area of Aponmu village, Akure South Local Government Area, Ondo State on July 19, 2015.

Electricity supply to the community had been disconnected for some months as a result of a faulty transformer.

The community leaders consequently imposed a N4, 000 levy on each building in the village to restore electricity supply.

Two residents, identified simply as Godwin and Fredrick, were however said to have refused to pay the said sum on the excuse that it was outrageous.

The duo also threatened to deal with whoever tried to disconnect electricity supply to their residence after power might have been re-

■ Kunle AKINRINADE ■

stored to the community.

It was learnt that the deceased welder, an indigene of Ogbadigbo Local Government Area, Benue State, had tried in vain to persuade the duo to pay the money, leading to an altercation between them.

Bystanders were said to have successfully prevented the errant duo and the late Francis from engaging in a fight.

Our correspondent gathered that Godwin and Fredrick later visited Francis's residence at about 10 pm with a man suspected to be a minion of law asking him to explain why he took them on earlier in the day over their refusal to pay electricity levy.

The encounter was said to have led to a fight during which Godwin allegedly reached for a knife and stabbed Francis to death.

Continued on page 52

CRIME & OTHER**32-year-old man stabbed to death in electricity bill row***Continued from page 51*

Godwin and Fredrick were said to have since fled the community while their whereabouts remained unknown.

Police were later invited to the scene and Francis' body has since been deposited in the mortuary at Akure General Hospital.

A source, who pleaded not to be named, said: "It is sad that the young welder (Francis) was gruesomely killed for trying to be a good resident. He only appealed to the two men (Godwin and Fredrick) to reconsider their stance and pay the levy since many residents had already paid.

"When they turned down his admonitions, Francis said he would purchase a generator to power his welding equipment and they became upset with him.

"They engaged him in a hot argument and a fight almost broke out between them, but for the intervention of bystanders who separated them.

"We did not know that they were still bottled up with anger until we heard that they visited Francis' residence and engaged him again in a fatal fight that claimed his life.

"Godwin and Fredrick have since disappeared from this community without a trace."

Other residents who spoke with The Nation described the late Francis as an unassuming and nice man.

A community leader, Elder Ak-inwale, described Francis' killing as unfortunate. He urged the law enforcement agents to ensure proper investigation of the incident and prosecute the masterminds.

He said: "We were all shocked at the dastard killing of an innocent young man who was only trying to advise misguided residents to honour an obligation.

"The police should carry out adequate investigation and bring the perpetrators to justice."

Confirming the incident, the spokesman of Ondo State Police Command, Wole Ogodo, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), said: "The story is true. On July 19, 2015, at about 22.30 hours, an argument ensued between one Sunday Francis, 32, Godwin, 30 and Fredrick, 33, all of Oke-Alafia, Aponmu, Akure, over reconnection of electricity.

"In the process, Godwin brought out a knife and stabbed Francis on the chest. Francis died on the spot after which Godwin and Fredrick escaped from the scene.

"Efforts are being intensified to arrest the fleeing suspects while investigation continues."

Disquiet rules