

Mob lynches suspected kidnapper in Oshodi

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The crowd at the scene INSET: Adu's damaged phone and the suspected kidnapper writhing in pain... yesterday

Injured Demola... yesterday

•Civil Defence officer beaten up for 'interfering'

A mob yesterday lynched a suspected kidnapper in Oshodi, Lagos.

An Intelligent Officer (IO) with the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) Afe Demola, who rushed to his rescue, was beaten to a pulp. He was said to have been mistaken for a kidnapper.

The suspect was stripped naked before he was lynched at Brown Street, Oshodi.

His body was taken away by the police.

The mob descended on Damola when he pleaded with them to hand over the suspect to the police.

The mob descended on him with stones, punches and broken bottles on mentioning the police.

The timely intervention of his colleagues, who rushed down to Brown Street, saved him.

But three of them, two women and a man, were injured in the ensuing melee.

They are Tosin Audu, whose phone was damaged, Fatimo Kolawole and Dimeji Olaleye.

The mob chased them into the Oshodi-Iso Local Government secretariat before they were repelled by other NSCDC officials.

Demola was rushed to the nearby primary health centre, where his head, arm and stomach were stitched.

A senior NSCDC official, who asked not to be named, described the attack as callous.

According to him, Demola was writing a report of his field work earlier in the day before we all heard noise.

“He left the report and rushed down to the place. He saw the crowd trying to lynch a suspected kidnapper. While trying to stop them and advising them to allow police handle the situation, the crowd got angry. One of them accused him of being the suspected kidnapper’s colleague and they descended on him.

“It took the timely intervention of his colleagues before he was saved. Three of them were also injured by the mob. Sensing danger, they all ran back to the council while the mob chased them with broken bottles and stones,” he said.

He accused the police of negligence.

“We rushed to meet some police officers inside the council secretariat, but they rebuffed us. Instead of helping us to quell the mob, they were busy passing the buck. We are highly disappointed in the police officers’ show of shame,” he said.

The Nation saw the crowd pelting the suspected kidnapper with stones, stick and other dangerous weapons.

Speaking with *The Nation*, an eyewitness said the suspect trailed a seven-year-old boy coming from lesson and kidnapped him at Salami Street, Oshodi while urinating beside a car.

“Two men, who were behind him suddenly discovered that the boy has disappeared. They suspected the man and hurriedly ran towards him to check what he was carrying in a big *Ghana Must Go* bag. He took a bike and ran away. The men chased him and started shouting kidnapper! Kidnapper!! Kidnapper!!! Somebody hit his bike around Owena and he fell down. They checked the bag and discovered that the boy has been strangled.

“While interrogating him, he claimed to be a Further Mathematics teacher in a secondary school around. They said he was lying and started beaten him.”

Another eyewitness said the guy kidnapped three children coming from holiday coaching class.

“The suspect was chased from Afariogun before he was caught around this place. One of the children is dead, two others were taken to hospital for treatment,” he said.

Lagos State NSCDC Commandant Tajudeen Balogun described the mob’s action as barbaric.

“How could they have descended on our officers for trying to prevent them from engaging in jungle justice?” he queried, adding: “Everybody has talked about jungle justice not being

the solution to increase in crime because if you catch a suspect and hand him over to police for interrogation, he might give you some other information that would lead to the arrest of some other people. But if you kill a person like that whatever he wanted to tell you has gone down the drain and it is very unfortunate that sometime the public doesn't trust the security agencies. If not when you arrest you must know the syndicate he belongs to, how many of them are working together? Where are the others? By allowing that, you can have a lot of information to stop that thing from happening."

He urged the public to always confide in Civil Defence, promising that such vital information would be treated with confidentiality.

"The issue of securing our environment is everybody's responsibility. All of us must work together to make our environment safe and secured. No matter the circumstance, jungle justice is not the best," Balogun said