

Anger in Enugu community as vigilantes kill teenager over drug dealing

• Three houses burnt in protest by youths

From Damian Duruiheoma, Enugu

No few than three houses were reportedly set ablaze by irate youths in Nkpologwu community, Uzo-Uwani Local Government, Enugu State.

The violent demonstrations across the community followed the alleged killing of a 22-year-old man, Philip Okoro, by the local vigilante for allegedly selling methamphetamine popularly known as *Mkpurumari*.

The vigilante operatives were said to have stormed the residence of the deceased on Wednesday night in order to arrest him, but the deceased resisted arrest and attempted to run away; a development that provoked the shooting.

Village sources said one of vigilante men shot the deceased on the waist and he reportedly died the following day (Thursday).

It was learnt that the news of the boy's death angered the youths, who went on the rampage, burning down houses belonging to the vigilante members.

At the time of filing this report, three houses had been confirmed burnt by the villagers while some others were also torched.

One of the villagers said: "We are currently living in fear because we don't know what will happen next and we are helpless."

"Immediately the news of the boy's death hit the village, the youths mobilised and went on the rampage."

"As I speak with you now, the house of the Chief Security Officer of our local government, Barrister Chijioke Ezugwu, has been completely burnt down."

"Two other houses in Ama-Idi village were also burnt. I can't tell you the extent of destruction in some other parts of Nkpologwu, because nobody is moving out for now."

"The house of another business man, Anthony Ani, was torched and this arson is spreading by the day."

"We call on the relevant authorities to rise up and save our agrarian community before the situation gets out of hand."

In a statement issued in Enugu, the spokesman of the Enugu State Police Command, Daniel Ndukwe, said that "two (2) members of the vigilante group directly linked to the shooting and murder of the victim have been arrested."

"They include one Annene Idu (m), alleged to have shot the deceased, and Chijioke Ezugwu (m), the Chief Security Officer of the L.G.A. said to have led the vigilantes to the scene of the incident to arrest hard drugs dealers."

"Additionally, the Pump Action (gun) used for the act has been recovered."

Ndukwe added that the commissioner of police, Enugu State Police Command, CP Abubakar Lawal, had ordered the Deputy Commissioner of Police in-charge of the State CID to conduct a full-scale investigation into the case. The police also disclosed that its operatives swiftly put out the fire in the house of the mentioned vigilante team leader before the building could be burnt down.

The statement said that normalcy had since been restored in the area, while the CP entreated residents of the community to remain law-abiding and avoid acts capable of breaching public peace in the area.

He urged them to support the police in the ongoing investigation.



Amid a divorce battle, legendary singer, Paul Okoye of the P-Square

In court documents