

Witchcraft allegation: Gov orders arrest, prosecution of persons involved in murder of woman

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THE Cross River State Police Command has launched a manhunt for alleged killers of a woman accused of witchcraft in the Old Ntem community, Akamkpa Local Government Area of the state.

This followed the directive of the state governor, Basset Otu, who ordered the arrest and prosecutes of the alleged killers of the woman, Martina Okey Itagbor.

The directive was contained in a press release signed by the Chief Press Secretary to the Cross River governor, Mr Emmanuel Ogbeche, dated June 30, 2023, with the reference number GO/PRESS/005/VOL.I/032.

Otu said: "I have directed the Commissioner of Police

in the state to mobilise all tactical and investigative assets and ensure that the perpetrators of this heinous act are brought to justice.

"My attention has been drawn to the alleged burning to death of a citizen of the state, Martina Odey Itagbor, of Old Netim in Akamkpa Local Government Area of the state by some unscrupulous, wild and criminal-minded youths.

"It's sheer savagery and cowardice for the youths or anybody to take the laws into their hands, more so, involving a helpless woman.

"Such abhorrent acts have no place in a constitutional democracy that Nigeria practices which our state is part of. The governor has strongly warned against the practice

of jungle justice in the state.

"Our people must do away with all relics of culture that promote violence, murder and criminality such as in this instance.

"Let me warn against such acts as we have laws and statutes to deal with issues of wrongdoings and disagreements.

"As an administration committed to the People's First Agenda, we will be intolerant to acts capable of breaching the peace, endangering citizens and businesses and portraying the state in a bad light."

Sympathising with the family of the deceased and community, Otu emphasised that anyone found taking laws into their hands would have his day in court.

Also, Commissioner of Police in the state, Gyogon Grimah, directed that the perpetrators be arrested and prosecuted according to the law.

The commissioner, who described the incident as unfortunate, noted that no person had the right to take another life under any guise.

According to him: "The issue of jungle justice is one crime that the police do not take lightly and as such, we have already commenced manhunt for those responsible for the dastardly act."

Sunday Tribune gathered that the woman was accused of witchcraft by two men, Christopher Sunday and Festus Etim Umoh, who later led other persons to kill her a few days ago.