

# 23-year-old man falsely accused of phone theft beaten to death in Delta

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I was a sad Fathers' Day in Agbor, Delta State last Sunday as a 23-year-old young man was beaten to death by members of a local vigilante group in the area over a missing phone.

The deceased, Joe Philip, was falsely accused of stealing a Nokia torchlight phone which a lady in the neighbourhood of Mariere Lane brought into his apartment for charging.

The woman, who has been

arrested by the police, had invited the vigilantes when she discovered that the phone was missing from the charging point and accused Philip of stealing it.

An eyewitness who pleaded anonymity narrated that after the young man returned from church, he turned on his generator and the woman in the same compound with him came knocking to charge her phone in his room.

While the young man was sleeping, it was said that the woman's son came to pick

the phone from the charging point without Philip's knowledge and unknown to his mother.

According to the report, the woman later returned to Philip's flat to collect the phone but couldn't find it.

The deceased, who expressed concern over the disappearance of the phone, however promised to replace it for her, but the woman insisted that she needed her exact phone, with a promise to teach him a lesson of his life.

The source said: "At this

point, the woman invited members of a local security outfit, Aniomma Security Watch Network, for intervention.

"They [vigilantes] arrived at the scene in the compound and descended on the young man, telling him to provide the missing phone, even as several persons pleaded with them, but they insisted that he must provide the phone.

"The beating continued until they realised that the situation had gone out of

their control; after a while, they noticed that the motionless body of the man had become cold and stiff, so they immediately carried him to their office at Gbenoba Street, Agbor, where a mob damaged their patrol Hilux vehicle."

The quick intervention of the police and military saved the situation, while the remains of the young man were taken to the morgue at Central Hospital, Agbor by the police, aggrieved relations and friends.

Few hours after the incident, the missing Nokia phone was seen with the woman's son who had earlier gone to pick it up.

The son claimed he didn't want to disturb Philip while asleep when he entered his room to pick the phone.

Confirming the incident on Tuesday, the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Bright Edafe, condemned acts of jungle justice, adding that those involved would be arrested and prosecuted for murder.