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Mob sets robbery suspect ablaze in Onitsha

By Emmanuel Obe, Onitsha Published: Tuesday, 28 Oct 2008

Onitsha, the commercial hub of Anambra State appeared to have returned to its once unsavoury past when vigilance groups carried out extra-judicial execution of armed robbery suspects.

A mob descended on another suspected armed robber on Monday at the Ochanja market roundabout, hacked him to death and set his body ablaze.

Ochanja roundabout has become notorious as an execution ground for armed robbery suspects in Onitsha.

Derico Ndiwe and the witchdoctor, Eddy Nawgu, were among dozens of people that executed at the junction.

On Friday, a local vigilance group killed and burned the body of a trader, one Uzoma, alias Nwa Onitsha, sparking off protests from traders, who testified the innocence of the deceased.

But the traders said that the deceased that was killed on Monday was an armed robber. Someone who said he witnessed the episode told our correspondent that the deceased had snatched a bag containing a large sum of money from his victim after shooting him in the stomach.

He said the deceased, who was well known as 'Bomboy,' belonged to a gang of armed robbers that had been snatching bags from people at gunpoint in the Odoakpu area of Onitsha.

He said the victim had come to trade at the Emordi Shoe market in Ochanja when he was attacked.

The victim had entered one of the shops holding his stomach while the robber went after him.

In the commotion that followed, a member of the vigilance group came in brandishing a machete. But he was shot by the robber whose bullets could not penetrate his body.

He engaged the robber in a scuffle before others joined to subdue him. The robbery victim was rushed to the hospital but died before help could reach him.

Our correspondent learnt that the robber had offered a N1m buyout for his life when he was taken to the office of the vigilance group. He asked to be taken to the police station instead

The robbery suspect was also said to have owned up to killing a pregnant woman and dispossessing her of N900, 000 on Thursday in front of a bank near the market.

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