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## Mob hacks suspected thieves, sets car ablaze

FEBRUARY 13, 2014 BY MUDIAGA AFFE 10 COMMENTS

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One of the suspects. Inset: the burnt vehicle.

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Three suspected criminals, who allegedly specialised in snatching bags from women in Calabar, Cross River State, were on Tuesday hacked with machetes almost to the point of death by residents of the area.

The suspected criminals were trailed by eyewitnesses after they had allegedly succeeded in snatching the bag of an unidentified woman who had just come out from a bank in the area.

The Volkswagen Vento salon car which was allegedly used for the operation was also set ablaze by the angry mob.

An eyewitness and a newspaper vendor, identified simply as Asuquo, said the thieves snatched the bag containing an unspecified sum of money from the woman who stepped out of First Bank premises along Calabar Road and sped off.

He explained that unknown to the suspects, another unidentified lady had driven behind them in company with others after she spotted what had happened. They intercepted the Volkswagen car at Goldie/Atu junction where an angry mob later took over.

Asuquo said, "They snatched a bag from the woman on Calabar Road and drove through Target down to Goldie here, where they were accosted by the mob. A lady who saw them when the thieves snatched the bag raised the alarm as she was driving and those people joined her in the chase.

"When the men got to Goldie by Atu roundabout, they attempted to make a U-turn, but about three cars blocked them from all sides."

Asuquo explained further that when the suspected thieves saw that they had been trapped, they wound up the side glasses of the vehicle and remained inside.

"It was at that point that the lady in the first car came out of her car and raised the alarm, which attracted more people. Instantly, the thieves' car glasses were broken and they were dragged out of the car. From nowhere, people brought out machetes."

He said the suspected thieves were inflicted with cuts before the arrival of policemen from the Atakpa Police Division, who rescued and took the suspects to the station.

When contacted, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Mr Hogan Bassey, said, "The boys are with us and are being given medical attention. They will appear in court after investigations are completed."

Meanwhile, two robbers operating in a commercial tricycle around the Anantigha area of Calabar were killed on Monday, while their tricycle was set ablaze. Another suspected criminal was almost lynched along Uwanse



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Street, but was rescued by the police who whisked him away.

A resident of Uwanse, Mr. Akpan Udo-Ekpo, told *PUNCH Metro* that residents of Calabar metropolis decided to confront criminals as the police appeared powerless to combat crime in the area.

Udo-Ekpo said before now, they used to apprehend criminals and hand them over to the police, only for them to be released later.

Another resident of Uwanse, Mr. Moses Etim, said the residents decided to form vigilance groups to tackle the increasing crime rate in the city.

He said the level of insecurity in the area was frightening, adding, "that is why we decided to protect ourselves from these criminals."

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