

# Suspected serial rapist set ablaze in Delta

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## Ovie Okpare, Warri

an angry mob on Wednesday set ablaze a suspected member of a gang of serial rapists that had terrorised Ughelli and its neighbouring communities in Delta State.

No fewer than four ladies, including the wife of a popular hotelier in the metropolis, had been raped by the gang of rapists in the last two weeks.

One of the victims lost her life in the process.

The group, according to residents, specialises in raping and attacking salesgirls and middle-aged women.

Luck, however, ran out on the suspected member of the group on Wednesday when he allegedly attempted to rape a salesgirl

(name withheld) at the Adagharagba Junction near the Ughelli Central Market.

He was said to have been apprehended by the residents.

It was gathered that the suspect was apprehended by a mob at about 11.30am when he attempted to rape the salesgirl.

A resident, who witnessed the incident, told our correspondent that there had been a lot of killings and rape by a group of young men who targeted salesgirls and female traders within Ughelli and its environs.

The source noted that the suspected rapist had confessed that he was a member of a three-member gang that raped salesgirls and female traders in the community.

The suspect, who hailed from Oroahakpor community in Ethiope-West Local Government Area of the state, reportedly said other members of the gang fled on sighting the mob.

Another eyewitness, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said, "The hoodlums pretended to be customers buying things in bulk and that was why they were allowed to enter the store. The next thing we heard was the screaming of the salesgirl and we immediately rushed in only to see that that she had been attacked; she was bleeding.

"The mob pursued the suspects, who had fled the scene. They caught up with one of them at the Omotor Junction, where he was set ablaze before the arrival of security agents."

The salesgirl, while recounting her ordeal at the Accident and Emergency Unit of the Ughelli Central Hospital where she was receiving treatment, said the suspects came under the guise of wanting to purchase items from the store.

She said, "One of them hit me on the head and I screamed.I was rescued by a male neighbour, who rushed to the shop, after the suspects had fled the scene."

It was later gathered that another member of the group was arrested along Market Road by policemen from the Ughelli Police Division.

The spokesperson for the Delta State Police Command, SP Celestina Kalu, said she had not been briefed on the incident.