

## Genesis of the crisis

But trouble started on August 15, 2016 when some youths led by the then Unenurhie Community Youth President, Mr Festus Wilfred, with support from the then President-General, Mr Felix Edjereki, popularly known as Ibori, allegedly burnt to death one Arukoghene Isito, a father of two, for allegedly stealing N90 bread from a store in the town.

According to findings by *Saturday PUNCH*, Osito's killers paid deaf ears to pleas from members of the community including the deceased's relative for him to be released. Instead, they decided to carry out their action on the grounds that a new law demanded that a person caught stealing should be burnt to death. Stanley, who witnessed the gruesome murder, gave an insight into what actually happened.

“What really happened was that, sometime in August 2016 when I was still living in the community, I heard a noise and when I came out, I saw people heading towards the community town hall. I followed them to see what was going on.

“When I got there, I saw my cousin Isito being beaten up by the youth executive members led by one Festus Wilfred and others.

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“I then asked what offense he committed. They said he stole a N90 bread. I tried pleading with them not to set him ablaze but they said it's the new law in the community.

“Immediately, I ran down to the place of Mr Osiobe Ivwreghren alias Okparan, who is their ring leader and godfather to intervene but he told me that it was too late and there was nothing he could do to save Isito.

“Ivwreghren said that orders had been given to the boys, that there was nothing he could do.

“So, when I went back to the scene at the town hall, it was in my presence that they brought out vehicle tyres and put it on his neck. They poured petrol on him and shot him so he could be burnt by fire. There was no way some of us could rescue him. His killers celebrated until my cousin was burnt to death.

“I left the scene in agony because I couldn't stand the gory sight. About two hours later, some of the youths came to our compound and ordered we should come and carry the corpse for burial.

“When they realised that none of us answered them, they went to carry the corpse and up till today, the corpse has not been seen. We don't know where the corpse was buried or dumped,” he said.

But when *Saturday PUNCH* visited the community, some elders and leaders, who reluctantly spoke with our correspondent due to fear of the deadly gang terrorising the town, said that they were not in support of the action of the youth executives led by Edjereki and Wilfred, saying that they lived at the mercy of the gang as no one had the guts to challenge their actions.

They noted that they were in support of the Obegor's family action in seeking justice for the late Isito, maintaining that there was no law in the community demanding anyone caught stealing to be burnt alive.