

Cross River landlord sets tenant ablaze over N11,000 rent

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Ada Wodu, Calabar

A landlord, David Ntiero Okon, has been arrested for allegedly setting his tenant ablaze in Calabar, Cross River State, over her failure to pay N11, 000 house rent.

The incident happened on Wednesday at No 9, Ansa Ewa Street, Cobham Town in the Bayside area of Calabar South.

The landlord allegedly poured fuel on Mrs Mary Samuel's room and ignited a fire that engulfed the one-room apartment.

An eyewitness and security guard who is a tenant in the house identified only as Obongette stated that Mary, who lived in the house for over seven years, owed the landlord N11, 000 after her fish business dwindled because of frequent attacks by militants in the Calabar Water Channel.

He said, “The woman was a fish seller and on Wednesday morning, she went to buy fish at Oron in Akwa Ibom State and when she returned in the evening, the landlord asked her to pay the balance of her annual rent. She said she didn’t have any money but should be allowed to sell her fish the next day to raise money to pay the rent.”

Obongette added, “The landlord was angered by the woman’s appeal and accused her of refusing to pay the rent. When the woman went to bathe, the landlord poured fuel in the room. After bathing, as she stepped into the room, the man ignited a fire which engulfed the place.

“As the woman shouted and tried to escape, the man locked the door and when people came to rescue her, he brought out a machete and chased them away, threatening to kill anyone who dared to rescue the burning lady.”

He said after the woman’s death, people in the area gathered and took the corpse to the landlord’s apartment and laid it there till the next day.

“Police came yesterday (Thursday) afternoon and carried the corpse and also arrested the man because we ensured that he didn’t escape. The house was built by his late father,” Obongette said.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Irene Ugbo, confirmed the incident, adding that the landlord had been arrested and the corpse deposited in the mortuary.

She said, “Investigations are going on to unravel what really happened.”

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