

# Vigilantes torture Anambra youth to death, two suspects detained

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A 22-year-old man, Osondu Ezemmaduchukwu, has been allegedly tortured to death by vigilantes at Ifite Nanka village, in the Orumba North Local Government Area of Anambra State.

*PUNCH Metro* gathered that the victim was accused of theft.

His elder brother, Ebere, while narrating the incident to our correspondent on Monday, said Osondu was arrested together with his immediate elder brother, Robinson, and other suspects.

He noted that they were all locked up at the Ifite Village Hall for over nine days.

He said, “The vigilantes arrested my brothers claiming that the said theft may have been perpetrated by them and their friends because they were seen smoking in an uncompleted building located at the back of the house where the incident happened.

“They had first arrested my deceased brother and the security people asked my father to pay them N40,000 for him to be released. We started running around for the money and he was released after the money was paid.

“But some days later, they came back again to re-arrest him and this time around, they picked two of my brothers and a neighbour. I am wondering why someone would be accused of committing a crime, arrested and detained by vigilantes, even when they did not have any evidence that he actually committed the said crime or see him with any exhibits. Yet, they did not hand him over to the police, but kept torturing him as they wished.

“As we were waiting to know the next line of action, the next thing was that we received calls, informing us that my younger brother had died in the vigilantes’ custody and that he died after vomiting foams.”

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He called on the state government, the police and rights groups to wade into the matter and ensure that justice was served.

He said Osondu's corpse was taken to the State Criminal Investigation Department, Awka, and the police were handling the matter.

However, the Ifite village Chairman, Mr Mike Ezemmaduka, said Osondu died after the vigilantes took him to their office where he fainted after trying to escape with his elder brother, who allegedly broke off handcuffs and the protector of the hall where they were detained.

Ezemmaduka claimed that after escaping, Osondu fainted halfway while his brother abandoned him and fled, adding that the brother's whereabouts was unknown, as the vigilantes were still searching for him.

He noted that the suspects were locked up in the vigilantes' hall because the police told the group that they were no longer accepting or remanding suspects because of the security situation in the state.

The state police spokesman, DSP Tochukwu Ikenga, confirmed the incident, adding that two of the vigilantes were in custody.

"Two persons are in our custody, while some persons mentioned are on the run. Investigation is ongoing and we will do everything possible to arrest the other persons and give the family justice," he added.