

# A'Ibom man to die by hanging for killing brother

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Court gavel

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A 29-year-old, Akaninyene Okpon, has been sentenced to death by hanging by the Akwa Ibom State High Court sitting in Uyo, over the murder of his elder brother, Friday Thomas Enyenokpon, whom he accused of being a witch behind his life's misfortunes.

The incident occurred in 2018, in Ikot Abasi Asutan, Ibesikpo Asutan Local Government Area, involving Akaninyene, a father of three children and his late brother, 37-year-old Ime Thomas Okpon, who was co-accused but died in custody before the conclusion of the trial.

The two siblings lay in ambush against their blood brother who had gone to check his hunting traps. They beheaded him and buried the head separately, an act that shocked and devastated the community.

Delivering judgment in Suit No. HU/5C/2019, in Uyo on Thursday, the trial judge, Justice Okon Okon, found that the prosecution had established its case beyond a reasonable doubt, relying on the defendant's confessional statement and corroborating evidence.

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The court held that the defendant, a primary three dropout, had earlier issued threats to eliminate the deceased and others in the family and later led the police to the crime scene where the remains of the deceased were recovered.

In his judgement, Justice Okon declared, "The sentence of the court upon you, Akaninyere Thomas Okpon, is that you be hanged by the neck until you are dead."

The court also ordered the forfeiture of the murder weapons: two machetes marked as Exhibits 1–1A to the state.