

Mob kills three robbery suspects in Benue



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By



Angry youths yesterday lynched three armed robbery suspects at Gbatse village in Ushongo Local Government Area of Benue State. This came barely five days after the police arrested and paraded a seven-man kidnapped gang for killing and burying 11 people in mass graves at Gbatse village.

The suspects were Terkaa Jabi alias Gajere, Terkimbir Iorbunde Ahungwaor and Paul Mbailuor Damsa.

They incurred the wrath of the community when they trailed a vehicle coming from Cross River State and attacked the passengers in the early hours of yesterday near the house of the District Head of Mbayegh, Chief Nathaniel Hoyo, in Ushongo Local Government Area.

Witnesses said when news about the robbery operation filtered to the palace of the paramount ruler in the area, Hoyo, he swiftly called the police on the phone and also mobilised youths to chase the attackers who ran into the hills in the surrounding area and hid in one of the caves. Armed mobile policemen and operatives of Operation Zenda arrived the area and joined the youth to comb the hills and caves where they arrested the suspects.

It was learnt that there was spontaneous outrage from the community against the suspects as their attack came a few days after the scandal of 11 exhumed bodies of kidnap and robbery victims in the area which prompted the visit of Governor Samuel Ortom. The mob stoned the suspects and dragged them along the road before the police took their bodies and displayed at the Ushongo Police Station. A crowd gathered to see the bodies.

The Chairman, Caretaker Committee of the local government, Mr. Bensen Agugu, who also visited the police station, commended the youth and community leaders from the area for rising up to the security challenge.

Agugu expressed his council's readiness to partner with communities to rid his local government of crime. Hoyo appealed to youths in the area to desist from crime and engage in productive activities which he said God would bless and prosper rather than taking to crime which would lead them to untimely death similar to that of the suspects.

The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Sewuese Anene, confirmed that some robbers were apprehended in the area.

The PPRO said: "What happened in Ushongo was not lynching but a continuation of the operation to rid the area of criminal elements." Anene promised to give more details to the media about the incident "when the operation is concluded".