

LIFE

AKWA IBOM MAN LAMENTS: Aboki scrap collectors stole our iron rods, murdered my only brother

By Chioma Onuegbu,
Uyo

Akwa Ibom State government, on Tuesday, banned the activities of scrap metal scavengers over grave infractions of some operators in the state. This came after a 24-year old indigene of Afaha Oku, Ikpa community in Uyo LGA, Anietie Asuquo, was gruesomely killed on Sunday, January 2. Elder brother of the deceased, Mr Godwin Asuquo, shares his story.

What is your relationship with the youth that was murdered on Sunday in this area during a clash with scrap metal collectors?

I am from Afaha Oku village. The boy that was killed is my younger brother. He was 24 years old.

He was my only brother. I don't have another brother; I don't have a sister. I don't have a father, no mother. He was living with me before he was killed.

Can you tell us what happened that Sunday that led to his death?

That Sunday I was in the church when I received a phone call to come back home. I asked what the prob-

lem was? The person that called me said my brother was dead. I asked how? He was in the house when I left for church. The person said some Hausa people that use trolley to move about collecting iron scrap entered our premises because there was nobody in the house and they carried some iron rods in our house. Unfortunately my brother was returning home and when he saw those rods inside their trolley he noticed that the rods looked like the ones kept in the house, so he ran to the house immediately and checked and discovered that those Aboki actually entered the house and carried those iron rods. So he ran and met them again and asked them to return those things. And I was told that as he tried to put his hands inside the trolley to remove the iron rods, they started fighting him. Two of them beat him to death. When I returned from church I saw my brother on the ground. I did not meet the Abokis when I arrived, but I was told that they were the ones that beat him to death. I rushed my brother to St Luke's Hospital, where doctors confirmed he was dead. I reported the matter to the police who advised me to deposit the corpse at the mortuary. In fact, the police assisted me with their vehicle, all of us went to the mortuary to deposit his body. He has not been buried, his body is still

in the mortuary as I am speaking with you. After depositing his body at the mortuary I followed the police to the station to lodge a formal report on the incident.

How come nobody came to his rescue?

It was a Sunday, people must have gone to church, but when a neighbour saw while they were beating him, he raised the alarm. The same person called me to come back home. It is painful how they killed my only brother.

Was your brother a welder?

No. Actually those were rods that we used in building this house, after putting protector in the house, some pieces of rod were remaining. Even the ones I kept myself, those Aboki scrap metal collectors took all of them. They stole my wife's cooking pot, and our kettle before now. Even the zinc sheets remaining after I roofed this building, they stole everything. If you look, you can see that we have bush and bush tracks around here. What those Aboki, do is that they will enter the bush, and do as if they are looking for some-

thing, and, from inside the bush, they will be monitoring the houses and any premises they noticed that there is nobody around they will enter there. If you go around all the houses here, you will hear complaints from people. They will tell you their experiences too. This thing has been going on in this area for years. They have been invading people's homes stealing things. And they do that mostly on Sundays when people go to church. For instance, if you come here on Sunday morning, you will not see anybody, because people go to church. And that is when they operate. All the items we have lost in this house, including two pots and a kettle, were all stolen on Sundays.

•Anietie
Asuquo

