

2) Police arrest 4 for lynching 5 persons over witchcraft in Calabar

By Emma Una

CALABAR— Four youths were, yesterday, arrested by police operatives after five persons including a widow were beaten to death over allegations that they were witches.

The suspects were arrested in Ndon Owong community, Odukpani Local Government Area, Cross River State.

A relative of one of the victims, who gave his name as Etim, said the victims were abducted at random from their homes and taken to the village square and beaten to death with sticks by some members of the community.

"One of the victims, Mrs Asuquo Iya, was a widow. Her husband passed away in 2021 and she has been struggling to cope with the stress of taking care of the children when she was tagged a witch and hacked to death," Etim told *Vanguard*.

He said the five persons were buried in a shallow grave on the outskirts of the community.

"We have reported the matter to the police and want justice to be done. I had to escape from the village because I could also be attacked and killed for reporting the matter to the police," he said.

Ms Irene Ugbo, the Cross River Police Command spokesman, said some policemen sent on surveillance to the community were held hostage by the youths until operatives of anti-cultism stormed the village to rescue the policemen and arrested four youths.

"Investigation is ongoing and more persons would be arrested to make sure we get to the root of the matter"