A'Ibom man to die by hanging for beheading brother

By Egufe Yafugborhi

UYO— An Akwa Ibom State High Court in Uyo has sentenced 29-year-old Akaninyene Thomas Okpon to death by hanging for murdering his elder brother, Friday Thomas Enyenokpon, in Ikot Abasi Asutan, Ibesikpo Asutan Local Government Area.

Akaninyene, a father of three, and another elder sibling, Ime Thomas Okpon, 37— who died in custody during trial—had, in 2018, ambushed their blood brother while he was checking his hunting traps, beheaded him, and buried the head separately. They accused him of being a witch responsible for their misfortunes.

In the judgment delivered on Thursday in Suit No. HU/5C/2019 in Uyo, Justice Okon Okon, ruled that the prosecution had proven its case beyond reasonable doubt, relying on the defendant's confessional statement and corroborating evidence.

The court held that the defendant, who dropped out of primary school in Grade Three, had issued death threats to the deceased and other family members prior to the murder. He had also led the police to the crime scene, where the remains of the deceased were recovered.

Justice Okon declared:

"The sentence of the court upon you, Akaninyene 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.