

ELECTRICITY VANDALIZATION IN ETINAN & AKWA IBOM STATE- NEED TO AMEND THE PRISON SENTENCE FOR VANDALIZATION FROM 7 YEARS TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT & URGENT NEED FOR IMPROVED POWER SUPPLY IN THE RURAL AREAS

Intro- Electricity Vandalization is stealing- and stealing falls into two categories: active stealing and passive stealing. Active stealing aggressively, wilfully, maliciously takes what belongs to someone else- or a community, through a variety of means. Theft, whether actively or passively perpetrated, has certain characteristics, so that stealing can be positively identified as an **evil act- and for evil acts in the electricity vandalization category, which are executed to the generality of the community- an obnoxious disservice to the community.**

H.E. Udom Emmanuel's Achievements & H.E. Umo Eno's ARISE Agenda per Rural Development: Government is a continuum, and we can see the efforts of the immediate past Governor, H.E. Udom Emmanuel's strides in the Power sector as preparatory to H.E. Umo Eno's Rural Development tenet of the A.R.I..S.E. Agenda. But, how can both their efforts be impactful, with the statistics I am about to share below:

Etinan Statistics:

Akwa Ibom Statistics: With 1,000 vandalized transformer taken from a total of 1,600 transformers in all- ONLY 600 are active, representing 40%. In the rural areas, apart from similar or worse numbers, the case is more dire, with PHEDC giving some LGAs as little as Zero-3 hours of light per day, grossly disregarding the provisions of NERC-

Background- on prison sentences- A criminal sentence refers to the formal legal consequences associated with a conviction while the term "restitution" in the criminal justice system means payment by an offender to the victim for the harm caused by the offender's wrongful acts. One of the direct application(s) of restitution is for the convicted criminal to "pay an amount equal to the value of the property, where the return of the property is impossible or impracticable" . . .how much can wicked people who vandalize public properties "pay" to atone for their sins to the communities? List instances- how many ill-educated children can they pay for?

Section 297 (1) of the Administration of Criminal Justice Law of Lagos State, 2015 provides that: "Where any person is convicted of having stolen or of having received stolen property, the Court convicting him may order that such property or a part of it be restored to the person who appears to be the owner, either on payment or without payment of any sum named in such order by the owner to the person in possession of such property or a part of it".

I'm not a Lawyer, but have done some research on the Criminal Justice Law, and research has led me to the case of Balogun vs AG. Ogun State (2002), where the apex Court held that the proper sentence for attempted armed robbery was life imprisonment and any reduction in the sentence cannot be justified under whatever circumstance.

On Tarbor Farms in Texas, a recent news item in July read- "Thieves steal source of food from a community in need" . . . Jahmal Huckaby, the Farm Manager had this to say. . ." It's a shame someone would steal that particular fridge; "To the person who stole our fridge: Karma is not going to be good. Even if you don't want to return it or are not going to return it, you're going to pay for it at the end of the day. I hope you enjoy the fridge or get something out of it because you did a whole community a disservice."

Is electricity vandalization not akin to armed robbery? If it is, can a 7-year prison sentencing for electricity vandalization be enough restitution to wipe the generational tears these vandals- (and their associates in the vandalization value chain have caused Akwa Ibom State, as a whole?)

Socio-Economic Impacts on Society: In 2019, at a school very near my village of Ata Efa in Etinan LGA, only 5 SSCE students were able to pass JAMB- which was now CBT based . . .because there was no electricity for the others to get accustomed to using a Computer . . .need I say more about the impact of this particular nuance in the next 10,20 or 30 years?

My Recommendations:

1. Amend the Prison sentence for Electricity Vandalization from 7 years to Life Imprisonment
2. PHEDC should be compelled to perform a needs analysis on a per LGA basis- and let's gauge the total extent of damage, with a view to solving this Power situation once and for all
3. Akwa GIS, the Ministries of Power, Local Government & Chieftaincy Affairs, Internal Security, Science & Technology- to come together, employ GIS Mapping of each transformer in the State & introduce motion & alarm detection measures to remove this menace from amongst our people & save the future generations of Akwa Ibomites.