

Grave-robbing five jailed for looting Riam cemetery

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MIRI: Three brothers were among five men sentenced to one year and eight months' imprisonment by the Magistrate's Court here yesterday for vandalising a woman's grave at the Roman Catholic Cemetery in Riam.

A sixth accused, a 16-year-old who is the younger brother of the three siblings, was released on RM1,000 bail with his parents as sureties pending the hearing of his probation officer's report on Nov 25.

All six accused had pleaded guilty to a charge under Section 426 of the Penal Code, which provides for up to five years' imprisonment or a fine, or both, upon conviction.

The five adult accused are Mat Abdul Rahman, 34, and his younger brothers Muhammad

Iwan, 33, and Bujang, 28, from Kampung Sebalik, Sibuti; Mohammad Shajiry Abdullah, 21, from Kampung Masjid Lama, Belawai; and Muhammad Khairul Abdullah, 23, from Pujut Adong 1 here.

According to the facts of the case, a 30-year-old man lodged a police report on Sept 3 after his late mother's grave at the Roman Catholic Cemetery 2 in Riam had been broken into and damaged by unknown persons.

The complainant said he learned of the incident at about 1.30pm that day after receiving a phone call from his uncle.

The grave had been damaged at the lower part of the wall on the left corner, where ceramic tiles had been smashed to create a hole in an apparent search for valuables.

The deceased's clothing were

also found scattered on top of the grave.

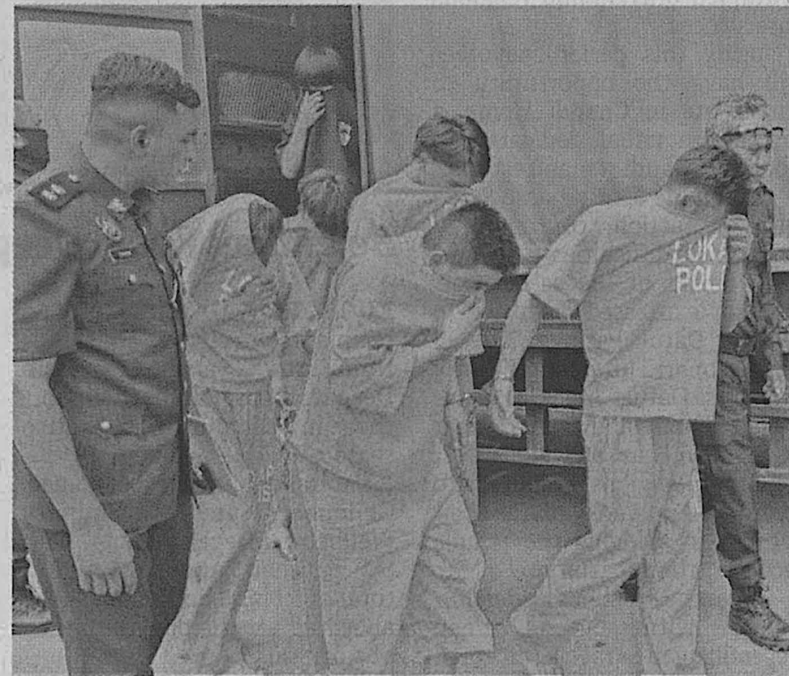
Acting on information and intelligence gathered, police arrested all six accused and seized a torchlight, a hammer, a sledgehammer, and a screwdriver as exhibits.

Further investigations revealed that the act was committed at about 3.30am on Sept 2.

Police also found that the group had been involved in similar incidents at other cemeteries here, namely the Methodist Cemetery Riam, the Bahai Cemetery Riam, and the BEM Cemetery Riam.

Deputy public prosecutor Muhammad Farhan Mohd Pauzi prosecuted the case before Magistrate Nursyaheeqa Nazwa Radzali.

All the accused were unrepresented by counsel.



Police officers escort the accused at the court compound.