

# Three die, 25 houses razed in Delta gas tanker explosion

From Godwin Ijediogor, Chido Okafor and Monday Osayande (Delta)

• Suspected armed robbers attack bullion van, cart away money in Delta

THREE persons have been confirmed dead while many houses were razed in Ohoror community, Ughelli North council, after a truck conveying liquefied petroleum gas exploded. The accident involving two other trucks at the popular Ohoror Junction, Uwherun Kingdom, occurred on Wednesday night.

About 25 houses were lost to the inferno according to one of the leaders of the community, Simeon Okofo, who spoke to *The Guardian* on telephone.

He disclosed that the incident happened at about 3.a.m. in the morning when many of the community people were still in bed.

He said: "A tanker loaded with fuel was parked along the road and a truck rammed into the fuel tanker, it caught fire, emptied the fuel and set many houses on fire in the community."

He said two persons were burnt to death in their sleep while one of the severely burnt victim died before he was rushed to the hospital; others with degrees of injuries were rushed to hospitals in Ughelli.

It was gathered that some of the victims were rushed to the State University teaching hospital, Oghara.

The Delta State governor Ifeanyi Okowa who visited the community yesterday, commiserated with the community and called for immediate assessment of the cause of the explosion.

The governor said that no effort would be spared in putting out the fire completely and directed the State Director of Fire Service to remain on ground until the fire was completely extinguished.

Okowa who was accompanied by the Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Sherrif Oborevwori and Secretary to the State Government, Patrick Ukah, commended the Fire Service for prompt response and advised the community to keep off from the scene, in addition to being vigilant to avoid loss of life as government was working hard to contain the spread of the explosion. Earlier, the state's Director of Fire Services, Eugene Oziwele, said his men were alerted at dawn and quickly mobilised to the community.

Also briefing the governor, President-General of Uwherun Kingdom, Macpherson Igbedi, said that no fewer than 20 houses were burnt and appealed for more efforts in evacuating abandoned gas-laden tankers before they explode.

MEANWHILE, a gang of suspected armed robbers yesterday, attacked a bullion van belonging to one of the new generation banks and carted away an undisclosed amount of money. *The Guardian* gathered that the Bullion Van was successfully robbed along Otor-

Owhe on the Ughelli-Asaba dual carriageway in Isoko North local government area of Delta State.

It was not ascertained there was any casualty, just as it was not clear where the bullion van was heading when the hoodlums waylaid it.

The Robbers, it was learnt shot sporadically at the bullion van, damaged the windshield and thereafter looted money, unchallenged. When contacted, the State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Bright Eda said he was yet to receive tails.