

Three children, parents die after rice meal in Anambra

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•Police: we're waiting for autopsy

A family of five has reportedly died after eating a meal suspected to contain poison at Umuatuegwu Okija in Ihiala Local Government Area of Anambra State.

The father of the three children was said to be a commercial motorcycle (Okada) operator, Albert Ndenemenu.

His wife, Nwanne, as well as their three children reportedly died after eating the meal.

Details of the incident could not be ascertained last night, but police spokesperson Princess Nkeiruka Nwode told reporters that the command was waiting for autopsy reports on the deceased's bodies.

There were conflicting reports on the likely cause of the deaths, but the police spokesperson said the command would not speculate but investigate the matter and get its facts right.

Though Nwode did not speak on the alleged arrest of some suspects on the incident, but *The Nation* gathered that three persons had been arrested over the matter.

A source, who spoke in confidence from Okija, said the deaths were through food poisoning, while some others claimed they were fetish-related.

An eyewitness at Umuatuegwu Okija said Mrs. Ndenemenu, who was the last to die, prepared rice for the family's lunch.

All members of the family were said to have eaten the food.

Shortly after, her husband and her children reportedly started vomiting blood.

When some villagers rushed into their compound, following her alarm, all the family members were said to have died.

The source also said the woman collapsed on seeing her husband and children dead.

She was reportedly taken to Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital (NAUTH) at Nnewi, where she died.

A resident of the community Sir Ignatius Okonkwo said the cause of deaths was yet to be ascertained.

The man noted that efforts to prevail on the authorities of NAUTH to conduct an autopsy on the family did not yield fruit.

Another person, said to be an in-law to the family, was said to have taken the bodies to a mortuary.

The Nation gathered that when stories were making the rounds that the family was poisoned, the in-law brought the five dead bodies back to their house, where they were lined up in the open for several hours.

Other members of the family were said to have later returned the bodies to the mortuary.