

# Navy burns exhibit, fire kills three, razes 2 houses in Rivers community

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**T**HREE persons have been feared dead and several others missing in a fire incident at Oru-Amaboko community in the Degema Local Government Area of Rivers State.

The fire, which started in the wee hours of Sunday, also consumed several houses, shops, goods and other property worth millions of naira.

Some of the affected residents said the fire started after security men set fire to a boat suspected to contain illegally refined petroleum products, as it extended to the community due to the heavy tide.

While lamenting that they lost everything to the fire, the community dwellers called on the Nigerian Navy and the Rivers State Government to come to their aid.

An elderly resident, who did not identify himself, said, "The Navy burnt a boat on the seashore. We all saw that the tide took it away. Around 2am in the night, what we saw was fire.

"The tide brought the boat back to this community, and you can see everywhere is burnt down. At that time of the day, some persons ran out in their underwear.

"Somebody lent me the clothes I am wearing."

The Amadabo (traditional ruler) of Oru-Amaboko community, Alaibiye West, called for government's intervention in the incident.

"All the boats are burnt and many other things like houses destroyed. People have died. So, the government should come and take care of these things.

"There is the need to visit the



## •Scene of the incident

families of the people that died, and even their houses," the monarch stated.

A representative of the Amayanabo of Bille community, Erekosima Alalibo, said a thorough assessment of the damage done would be conducted and the findings related to the appropriate authorities.

"A lodge (guest house) was also burnt. We don't know the number of persons there, but we are only assessing the number to be 10. It may be more because there were people who were lodging because strangers come here every day. Some humans were burnt. For now, we only learnt that about three have been buried," he stated.

The spokesman for the Nigerian Navy Ship Pathfinder in Rivers State, Lt. Cdr. Racheed Iginla, said the command was investigating the allegations by the community.

He said, "We are aware of the situation and investigation is ongoing. We will let the public know our findings and position."

The Nigerian Navy is currently carrying out a ground and aerial operation tagged, Operation Dakatar Da Barawo (Stop the thief), aimed at curtailing illegal oil theft and crude oil refining in the Niger Delta region and its environs.