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Bloody Christmas Eve in Cross River

Our Reporter

December 25, 2013

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... As truck rams into youths, kills four
• Angry youths wreak havoc on motorists, vehicles

From JUDEX OKORO, Calabar

The joyous moment of the Christmas season turned bloody yesterday, as a truck with registration No. FKJ505XC lost control, killing four persons and leaving scores injured along Awi community on the Calabar- Ikom highway.

The tragic incident occurred at about 6:00am when the truck going to Akamkpa to carry granite lost control and rammed into some youths from Mbarakom, a community in Akamkpa Local Government area of Cross River State. The youths had embarked on a road walk as part of activities to mark the festive period.

Angered by the incident, youths in the area went on the rampage, unleashing mayhem on motorists plying the road.

As at the time of filing this report, several vehicles, including two trucks and a private Audi travelling for Christmas had been razed by the irate youths.

An eye witness, Miss. Ekam Emmanuel, told the reporter: "I came out as early as 6:00am to clean my shop and on getting there, I met the youths jogging on the highway. But suddenly a 911 truck coming from Calabar on high speed, lost control and rammed into the youths. four persons were killed on the spot.

"Having seen what happened, the driver stopped, but immediately the angry Mbarakom youths descended on the truck driver and his conductor, beating them and setting their truck set ablaze."

Ekam added, "Within that period, another truck with the plate number Cross River, KAM45XA plying the same road to Calabar was forcefully stopped and the driver and others were seriously beaten. They managed to escape but their truck was also set ablaze."

The angry youths were not satisfied. They also urnt another Audi car while the driver escaped.

The scene would have been bloodier but for the army and policemen that came to calm the situation and eventually got the situation under control."

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In an interview with the reporter, Mr. Nwankwo Isaiah, brother to the conductor of the truck that killed the four Mbarakom youths said: "I was called by my brother, the conductor that if I didn't come and meet him in Awi at once, that he would be killed. When I got there he had been seriously wounded because of the accident.

"He and the driver were assaulted with machete but were rescued by security operatives. I am surprised because we don't leave in a lawless society."

The victims of the incident are said to be currently receiving treatment at the General Hospital, Akamkpa.

They include Mr. Chidi Duruba (the conductor of the truck that killed the youths. He hails from Imo State; Miss. Blessing Etim, 18, one of the Mbarakom youths seriously injured; Mr. Edwin Oragunye, driver of the truck that killed the youths and Sunday Ottor, 45, a policeman attached to the Quick Intervention Squad Calabar. The youngest of those killed was 11-year-old Master Okechukwu Mbaka.

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