

Esther, a pupil of LEA Primary School Logyes- Vwang, had left home at 9.30am without the knowledge of her parents in company of two of her siblings and four other children to the village square at Vwang community for a New Year party. The festivity in the community was electrifying and the villagers, including women and children were in a frenzy of excitement.

However, at 10pm, her two siblings and four other children with whom they went to the party, returned home, but Esther did not. As the villagers dispersed to their various homes in darkness, she had missed her way and was guided by a supposed Good Samaritan in the midst of strangers who held her by the hand and led her on a journey to eternity.

Rather than alerting their parents on realizing that Esther had not arrived home, her siblings sneaked into their room and slept, until about 5.am the following day when their father, Yakubu John, woke up and checked on his children. He discovered Esther was not at home and raised the alarm.

Fruitless search

Yakubu went blank as his children narrated how they returned home the previous night without their sister. When he regained consciousness, he was too confused to initiate a search party for his missing seven-year-old daughter. Ladi, her distraught mother moved from one house to another in the community in search of possible clues to her whereabouts, but got none. Then, she reported the incident at the palace of Gwon Rwyai Vwang, the traditional ruler of the community. She also lodged a complaint at the divisional police headquarters at Vom, Jos South Local Government Area.

Her anxiety heightened when seven children also declared missing after the community's New Year party, were recovered and presented for identification by their parents. Esther was not among them. After a fruitless search for her missing daughter, her relatives suggested she consult a spiritualist nearby, to unveil how the girl vanished. The traumatized woman consulted the unidentified spiritualist who demanded payment of a sum of N60, 000 before he would direct them to where her daughter could be found. Esther's parents could only raise N20, 000, which was rejected and the attempt was truncated. All hope had been lost after an intensive search.

Shocking discovery

On Thursday, January 11, a woman who had gone to fetch firewood on a mountainous area on the outskirts of the community sighted a pair of new children's slippers and artificial hair underneath some stones. She pulled the items out and saw the arms of a child. The middle-aged woman raised the alarm, attracting residents who converged on the scene to behold a gory sight. The corpse was identified to be Esther, who had been abducted, murdered and buried in a shallow grave by suspected ritualists.

When her body was exhumed, her eyes, tongue and private parts were missing. But her blood was fresh, indicating she might have been killed on that day. Her body was taken home for burial with the permission of the police after photographs of the scene were taken.

"I can't imagine myself in this condition; it's like a dream, that my daughter is gone forever. Those who killed my daughter will not know peace in their lifetime. I strongly believe that God will certainly expose their activities; they will be naked one day and consumed by the wrath of God. I pray that He will take away the pains and memories I have enjoyed with my little girl", her mother lamented in an encounter with our reporter.

Police reaction