

YULETIDE TRAGEDY: 3 siblings die in midnight fire

CROSS RIVER... THE PEOPLE'S PARADISE

O OKURIKANG OKOYONG—THREE children locked in by their 31-year-old hairdresser-mother, Mrs. Arit Asuquo Akiba, have been killed by a strange night fire at Okurikang Okoyong community, Odukpani Local Government Area, Cross River State.

The kids, Moses Akanenyene, 10 years; Blessing Emmanuel Akpa, six; and David Emmanuel Akpa, four years, born of two different fathers, were until their death, pupils in Akiba Ayi Nursery and Primary School, Okurikang community.

Grief-stricken family

Niger Delta Voice gathered that while many families were celebrating Christmas, the Ukpayang family was in sorrow following the sad incident on December 24 at the family's 17, Market Road residence in Okurikang Okoyong.

Mrs. Akiba told *Niger Delta Voice* that she went to knit a client's hair some metres away from the house, but brought the three children home and locked

the door from outside after putting them to bed.

Calamity

Her words: "I went back to complete the hair, but it was just too late for me to come back home that night, so I decided to pass the night there.

"When I came back the next morning, I saw a large crowd in front of the house and people started consoling me to take heart. It was then it dawned on me that tragedy had struck.

"I rushed in, even though they tried to stop me and what I saw made me speechless. It was the lifeless bodies of my three children.

"Moses, who was 10, Blessing was six years old, while David was only four and they all attended Akiba Ayi Nursery and Primary School, Okurikang."

Arit, who said her life would never be the same again with the exit of her God's precious gifts, told *Niger Delta Voice* that the fathers of the three kids, who had parted ways with her, years ago, showed up during the burial.

I couldn't move

—GRANDFATHER

Her grandfather, Elder

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