



Irate Christians setting ablaze Alobo's property at her home in Kamdini. Photos by Hudson Apunyo

## Christians destroy herbalist's property

OYAM

By Hudson Apunyo

The Police have arrested religious leaders who are said to have led a group of Christians during what they called a 'cleansing prayer', where they stormed a home of a herbalist and maliciously destroyed her property.

What was meant to be prayers to cleanse an accident blackspot on the Lira-Kamdini-Karuma and Gulu-Karuma highways on Friday, turned tragic for a herbalist, Santa Aloba, alias Mama Nnalongo, residing at Kamdini town in Oyam district, when the Christians stormed her home and destroyed her property.

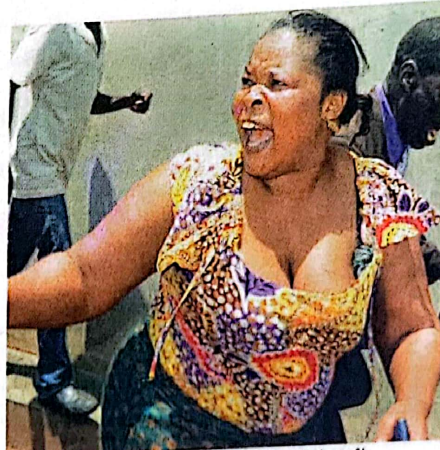
The Christians, who were said to have been led by Pastor John Opio, the Rev. Edward Otim, the Rev. Dickens Anyati and Warrant Officer Justine Opoka, attached to Karuma Uganda People's Defence Forces barracks, allegedly stormed Aloba's home and set her property ablaze. It is said that they were accusing her of practising witchcraft, which they said was the cause of the rampant accidents.

Police sources said the property destroyed include sh7m cash, a laptop, academic documents of Aloba's children, mattresses, traditional herbal medicine said to be worth sh10m, among other household property.

The regional Police commander of North Kyoga, John Ematu, said the two suspects, Anyati and Opio, who led the attack, were arrested on Saturday and, later, released on Police bond.

Ematu condemned the act, saying the religious leaders acted in a primitive manner by taking the law in their hands. He appealed to the people to respect the law.

Ematu said it was the local leaders of Kamdini, who gave



Aloba, who is accused of practising witchcraft

### POLICE REPORT

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a one-year-operation-licence for sh300,000, to Aloba.

He wondered how the community turned against Aloba and decided to take the law in their hands.

The case was reported at Kamdini Police Station (ref. No SD 11/04/08/2017).

In his defence, Opoka said they decided to hold the cleansing prayers because of the rampant road accidents.

He said frequent accidents had been taking place on the Karuma highway, with the recent one being that of a lorry that plunged into the Nile at Karuma falls, with none of the bodies having been recovered to date. Opoka said the driver, who survived the accident,

told him, that he saw a woman with a baby strapped to her back crossing the road. As he swerved the vehicle to avoid running into her, she vanished, which led him to believe it was a ghost.

"Something spiritual needs spiritual intervention," Opoka said.

He proposed that when the Karuma hydropower project is completed, the Government should allow the people to dedicate it to God.

Otim, from the Anglican Church, said he is hopeful the prayers will reduce the frequent road accidents. He called on the people to dedicate their lives to God by praying and seeking salvation.

In justifying their action on Aloba, Otim said she had been extorting money from the locals, where each person had to part with sh40,000 for consultation.

Later, the group prayed at the blackspot at Apii in Kole and other places, on the road before proceeding to Kamdini, where they also prayed for the business community and concluded with the prayers at Karuma bridge.