

**News**

March 7, 2026 by [Ogochukwu Anioke, Abakaliki](#)

# Four year old boy dies as fire guts shops in Ebonyi



A gas cylinder explosion has triggered a fire that destroyed five shops, killed a four-year-old boy and left four people critically injured.

The fire incident happened at Onuebonyi Junction in Abakaliki, the **Ebonyi State** capital on Thursday.

The incident occurred when a cooking gas cylinder reportedly exploded in one of the shops at the busy junction, sparking a fire that quickly spread to nearby stores.

An eyewitness, Oku Chinagorom, said the shop owner, popularly known as Mama Osi, was attending to customers when the cylinder suddenly exploded.

Mr Chinagorom said the woman's husband had travelled to their Okposi community a day before the incident.

"The cylinder exploded and the fire immediately spread to goods inside the shop," he said. "The flames quickly engulfed neighbouring stores."

According to him, Mama Osi sustained severe burns while trying to rescue her four children who were inside the shop at the time of the explosion.

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One of the children, identified as Osinachi, was burnt beyond recognition.

Residents in the area eventually put out the fire after frantic efforts and rushed the injured victims to a nearby hospital for treatment.

Witnesses said at least five shops were completely destroyed in the inferno, with goods and property worth millions of naira lost.

One of the affected traders, Nnenna Elom, said the fire occurred shortly after she left her shop to prepare for a burial ceremony.

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Mrs Elom said the blaze destroyed goods in her shop, including drums of oil and other items valued at more than ₦1 million.

She added that many of the items were purchased on credit and expressed concern about how she would repay her suppliers.

“Goods worth over ₦700,000 which I collected from suppliers earlier this morning were completely burnt,” she said.

She appealed to the Ebonyi State Government, the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and other individuals to support the affected victims.

Another trader, David Akam, an oil dealer, said the fire spread from a neighbouring shop and eventually engulfed five shops.

Mr Akam said he managed to rescue a woman whose wrapper caught fire during the chaos, although she sustained serious injuries.

He estimated that goods worth more than ₦20 million were destroyed in the fire.

The Executive Secretary of the Ebonyi State Emergency Management Agency (EBSEMA), Clement Ovuoba, confirmed the incident to reporters.

Mr Ovuoba said the agency had deployed a response team to the scene to assess the level of damage and document the losses.

He described the incident as unfortunate and said the findings would be forwarded to the appropriate authorities to facilitate possible government intervention for the victims.

The four injured victims, who are reportedly receiving treatment at the hospital, are said to be in critical condition.