

# Two inmates awaiting trial die after transformer surge at Uyo Custodial Centre

Udeme Utip November 13, 2025



Custodian Centers, Inmate

The Nigeria Correctional Service (NCoS), Akwa Ibom State Command, has confirmed the death of two awaiting trial inmates at the Uyo Custodial Centre following an electrical surge caused by a faulty transformer that exploded near the facility.

The tragic incident, which occurred about two weeks ago, reportedly threw the entire area into darkness after a high-voltage wire snapped and fell within the prison premises, leading to severe electrical damage and casualties.

Addressing members of the Correspondents' Chapel of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Akwa Ibom State Council, the State Controller of Corrections, Mr. Frank Okonkwo, described the incident as "deeply unfortunate," disclosing that two inmates lost their lives, two staff members sustained injuries, and several electrical installations within the facility were destroyed.

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"When the transformer exploded, PHEDC officials said it was due to excessive voltage. The surge affected our entire facility, destroying appliances, computers, and even the residence of the officer in charge.

“The most painful aspect was the loss of two inmates who were thrown off their seats during the incident. Our medical team administered first aid and rushed them to the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, where they were confirmed dead”. Okonkwo stated.

Okonkwo revealed that the deceased inmates were awaiting trial for conspiracy, kidnapping, and armed robbery, stressing that they remained presumed innocent until proven otherwise by the court.

He confirmed that the families of the victims had been contacted. One family has completed the necessary documentation for the release of the corpse, pending the conclusion of official investigations.

“It was a big loss to both the institution and the families. The same transformer had malfunctioned a few years ago, though no life was lost then. We are appealing to relevant authorities to urgently address this recurring problem to prevent a reoccurrence,” he added.

The Controller noted that the NCoS legal department has commenced a full investigation into the matter and would submit a comprehensive report once concluded.

He however announced plans by the command to launch a rehabilitation and empowerment programme for inmates who have successfully completed vocational training while in custody.

“We plan to empower about 30 inmates who are about to be discharged before the end of the year. They have acquired skills in tailoring, carpentry, barbing, welding, weaving, and pastry-making. With the support of donors and partner organisations, we’ll provide them with start-up packs to help them reintegrate into society and avoid reoffending,” he explained.

Okonkwo emphasized that the initiative is gender-sensitive, with female inmates equally benefiting from training and empowerment opportunities.

“We want them to return to society as useful citizens, not as repeat offenders,” he said.

A neighbor of the center who witnessed the tragic incident suggest that the Akwa Ibom incident underscores the urgent need for improved power infrastructure and safety compliance around public facilities, especially correctional centres that house vulnerable populations.