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IS THAT THE FIRST SIGN
THAT THE STATE IS IN FOR
A VERY "SMOOTH RIDE"?

Kerosene explosion kills 3 in Ebonyi

KENNETH OFOMA, *Abakaliki*

Death toll from explosion caused by adulterated kerosene increased as three persons, including a third year student in the department of Applied Sciences in Ebonyi State University were killed in separate incidents

Special Adviser to the State Governor on Solid Minerals, Dr. Ifeanyi Ike, who disclosed this said the situation has reached an alarming stage such that "government can no longer fold its hand and watch criminal minded businessmen decimate the country's population".

He said he visited some victims of the explosion in company of some members of the State House of Assembly after receiving reports to investigate the havoc kerosene adulteration had done.

"I went in the company of Hon. Aja Onu to Uburu, also with Hon. Kennedy Oga to Ohaukwu and at Uburu Joint Presbyterian Hospital, we saw Mrs Uzo Nwaeze, her situation was too bad"

"At Ohaukwu, nobody could stand the sight of another victim of the kerosene explosion. We went to the house of the traditional ruler of Izhia in Ohaukwu, Chief Odonu, the man lamented what happened to him with two of his daughters being victims of kerosene explosion arising from adulterated kerosene".

The man said, "My daughters purchased kerosene and were trying to light the lantern, but suddenly I heard a loud explosion, it was like a lightning, as if to say that NEPA restored light and immediately interrupted it, they were seriously burnt, by the time we got to hospital, one of them had died".

He disclosed that a lawmaker in the team, Kennedy Ogba was so moved that he donated the sum of N80,000 to the two victims who are still in various hospitals adding that his office has acquired devices to detect adulterated products. "And we shall soon embark on sensitisation of the populace on measures to adopt in avoiding buying adulterated petroleum products.

He said that as investigation by his office progressed into cases of pump price adjustment

by the dealers, his men found out that out of all petroleum dealers doing business in Abakaliki only one filling station, (Tycoon Motors), was found to be using the normal gauge.

Ike, while commending the decision of Tycoon Motors to insist on the use of proper gauge without adulterating their products, disclosed that his office would go on to blacklist erring filling stations.

His words: "We have been crying out about adulteration of petroleum products by marketers. Recently we got reports that some of them were mixing kerosene with

petrol to maximise profit. But unknown to us the case has gotten to this alarming proportion leading to the death of these unsuspecting people in Ebonyi State".

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