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## Countryman



## Man shot dead by MOPOL over 4 litre kerosene

VINCENT ADEKOYE, *Benin*

TRAGEDY struck in Benin, Edo State capital yesterday, as a mobile policeman attached to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), mega station shot dead an unemployed school leaver over four litres of Kerosene.

Eyewitness told *Daily Champion* that the deceased Mr. Ebenezer Aisen, a 34-year-old father of three was shot at close range by the mobile policeman during a minor argument over an attempt to purchase four litres of kerosene at the station.

The development added a new dimension to the acute kerosene scarcity in the state.

It would be recalled that there had been acute kerosene scarcity and diesel in the state since the past months. The situation in Benin was critical due to the attitude of officials and attendants at the mega station who have been accused by residents of diverting the products to black market operators.

Reports said the victim had gone to the mega station located on Sapele road in the early hours of yesterday to purchase four litres of kerosine for his aged mother when he was gunned down by the trigger happy cop.

It was gathered that there was a huge crowd at the station during which officials of the station invited the mobile policemen to help control the rowdy situation.

An eyewitness said: "We were all here with our jerry cans to buy kerosine. Some women came with several jerry cans and the attendants started attending to them leaving those of us on the line. We objected to the method, but because those women normally give the attendants money, they ignored us and continued to sell for them.

"Later, some of the boys who came with just small litres of cans started complaining and threatened to call police for the attendants. It was at this point that the attendants went inside the station and called the policemen.

"As we were trying to adjust our jerry cans on the normal queue, we just heard a gunshot and one of the boys who had been here since about 7.00am fell down and died. He was shot near his chest by the mobile policeman.

"The conclusion of the matter is that the mega station has become a curse rather than blessing to us in Benin. Rather than selling the products to innocent people in the state, attendants of the station in agreement with the senior officials sell products to women who in turn sell them to other people.

"On several occasion, they use to sell kerosine and diesel in the night. Government should help us. The entire staff of the mega station should be queried while new management should be employed to run the station so that the purpose of establishing it could be achieved", one of the women who witnessed the incident told newsmen at the premises of the mega station.

But, for the timely intervention of the Edo State police commissioner, Mr. Chris Dega, the station would have been set ablaze as hundreds of youths from the adjoining streets mobilized and invaded the station in protest over the gruesome killing of the youth.

Canisters and rubber bullets were used by the anti riot policemen drafted to the station, to disperse the angry youths.

Several persons sustained injury in the ensued pandemonium.

Effort to get comment from the management of the station proved abortive as they all ran out of the station immediately the boy fell down.

Confirming the incident, the Public Relation Officer (PRO), of the Edo State police command, Mr. Peter Ogboi, said they "were at the usual Monday morning conference when the sad news came to them that some youths were trying to vandalize the mag station in reaction to the death of one of them. We immediately dispersed our men to maintain peace there. We are trying to get detail of how it happened and I want to assure you that we shall get to the root of the matter."

Meanwhile, the lifeless body of the deceased has been deposited at the mortuary of the General Hospital in Benin while armed men have taken over the station.

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