

NEWS

Tuesday, August 21, 2007

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[National](#)
[Metro](#)
[Africa](#)
[World](#)
[Business](#)

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[Editorial](#)
[Columnists](#)
[Contributors](#)
[Letters](#)
[Cartoons](#)
[Discussions](#)
[Outlook](#)

SPORTS

[Home](#)
[Abroad](#)
[Golf Weekly](#)
[Results](#)

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[Focus](#)
[Policy & Politics](#)
[Arts](#)
[Media](#)
[Science](#)
[Natural Health](#)
[Law](#)
[Education](#)
[Weekend](#)
[Friday Review](#)
[Executive Briefs](#)
[Fashion](#)
[Food & Drink](#)
[Auto Wheels](#)
[Friday Worship](#)
[Saturday Magazine](#)
[Sunday Magazine](#)
[Ibru Ecumenical](#)
[Centre](#)
[Agro Care](#)

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[Property](#)
[Appointments](#)
[Money Watch](#)
[Market Report](#)
[Capital Market](#)
[Business Travels](#)
[Maritime Watch](#)
[Industry Watch](#)
[Energy Report](#)
[Insurance](#)
[Compulife](#)

 THE GUARDIAN

Kerosene fire kills pupil, injures four in Rivers

From Rose Ann Chikereuba, Port Harcourt

A KEROSENE explosion at Ogboloma community in Rivers State has claimed the life of a primary school pupil, Rebecca Afonyaa, and severely injured four others, thus lengthening the list of victims of the adulterated petroleum product of recent.

The 10-year-old child had struck a match to light a lantern on Friday night when it exploded. Others who were also in the house when the incident occurred, were also badly burnt.

A relation of the deceased, Mr. Ukwoma Inyabua, told The Guardian that Rebecca died in the early hours of Sunday at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital, Choba, where she was receiving treatment.

He explained that due to the remote location of Ogboloma, which is a riverine community, it was difficult for her relations to rush her to the hospital on the night of the incident.

Inyabua, who is the Deputy Director, Community Development in the state, said that four other injured members of the family were still lying critically ill at UPTH following the severe injuries sustained as a result of the explosion.

Barely three weeks ago, a kerosene explosion claimed the lives of a pregnant mother, her husband and four children at the Nigerian Railway quarters, old Port Harcourt Township area of the Rivers State.

The only surviving son, who was flown to South Africa for treatment by the Rivers State Governor, Mr. Celestine Omechia, died on Sunday after his legs were amputated to save his life. The boy, 12-year-old Hope Fadee, who was said to have sustained 80 per cent burns, could not survive it.

Worried by the reported cases of kerosene explosions, the Department of Petroleum Resources in the state has warned the public to desist from patronising hawkers of petroleum products.

The Acting Zonal Operations Controller, DPR, Port Harcourt Zone, Mrs. Onyebuchi Sibeudu, during a recent surveillance tour of some filling stations, said the organisation had taken samples of kerosene from about five filling stations to ascertain its quality.

She said: "We have taken samples of kerosene because of the kerosene explosions witnessed in the region recently to check if there is any difference between what they receive from the depot and what they are selling at the filling stations and on the streets".

Sibeudu called on the public to buy petroleum products only from certified filling stations to avoid buying adulterated kerosene.

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