

# NEWS

Friday, August 31, 2007

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## Fumes from power generating set kill four in Port Harcourt

*From Kelvin Ebiri, Port Harcourt*

**RESIDENTS** of Enugu waterfront in Port Harcourt were yesterday thrown into mourning following the death of a family of three and a visitor suspected to have been suffocated by fumes from a power generating set.

The owner of the house, who was identified as Mr. Amos Abako, a member of staff of the defunct French tyre manufacturing firm, Michelin, and two of his children, including his girl friend, were said to have slept with their electricity generator on inside the two bedroom apartment.

A neighbour of the deceased, who pleaded anonymity, disclosed to The Guardian that Abako arrived home late on Tuesday night and since there was no electricity power supply, he decided to switch on his generator to illuminate his home.

Because the compound is not fenced, Abako decided not to leave the generator outside to probably prevent it from being stolen.

Abako, who was later found dead with a female friend, left the power generating set on and slept off. By Wednesday morning, unsuspecting neighbours who heard the humming of the generating set even after the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) had restored power supply to the area, repeatedly banged at his door to inform him but there was no response.

Following the exhaustion of fuel in the generator set, it stopped working. By late Wednesday, his neighbours, however, became curious when they did realised that nobody had been seen all day, including the two children of the deceased.

The Guardian learnt that it was at this point that anxious

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neighbours and friends of the deceased persistently called his cell phone number which rang without a response. Suspecting that something sinister might have happened, they decided to call his wife who had travelled to Okrika.

Having tried her husband's line severally with no response, she decided to return to Port Harcourt and notified the police.

A team of policemen arrived and forced the door of the house open. They found the lifeless bodies of the man, his girl friend and two children inside the apartment.

The Rivers State Police Public Relations Officer, Mrs. Ireju Barasua, who confirmed the incident, urged residents to desist from the use of generating sets inside their homes.

She admonished the users of this alternative source of power to ensure that their power generators are positioned in a well-ventilated place to avoid inhaling carbon monoxide, which is suspected to have killed the victims.

Carbon monoxide is an odourless and colourless gas which cannot be seen or smelt. When inhaled, gas reacts with the oxygen in the blood, and essentially asphyxiates blood cells.

People exposed to small quantities of the deadly gas suffer minor eye irritation, dizziness, headaches, fatigue, and inability to think coherently. More extreme symptoms include vomiting, seizures, and collapse. Prolonged exposure can result in severe injury or death.

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