

Kerosene explosion claims two in Taraba

IT was double tragedy for the people of Wukari in Wukari Local Council of Taraba State last weekend when a kerosene explosion and a fire outbreak led to the death of two residents and property worth millions of naira were destroyed.

Chairman, Wukari Local Council, Wunuken Atoshi, confirmed to *The Guardian* yesterday that two people died in the explosion caused by the adulteration of kerosine.

He added that several people sustained various degrees of injuries in the incident.

The second incident, which occurred at Jubilee University in the area, was said to have destroyed a 60-bed female hostel in the school.

Atoshi identified one of the victims of the kerosene explosion as a vice principal with Mamara Girls Secondary School, Wukari.

He accused dealers of mixing petroleum products in "their quest to get rich quick" at the expense of the people.

Atoshi, who spoke at the council secretariat, expressed shock that illicit trade was at great risk to the innocent consumers.

Atoshi, who said the council had sent relief materials to the bereaved families and resolved to foot the medical bills of the injured, appealed to the

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dealers to desist from the illegal trade.

Two dealers, he said, have been arrested and handed over to the police in connection with incident. Though no senior officer was on hand to confirm the arrest, a junior officer said: "We have in our custody two suspects believed to have caused the kerosene explosion in this town (Wukari)."

The inferno at the Jubilee University, which razed down a 60-bed female hostel, was reportedly caused by electrical appliances plugged by the students.

Atoshi said property worth millions of naira were destroyed by the fire, adding that food items had been sent to the school to assist the victims. No life was, however, lost in the incident.

In Yenagoa, the Bayelsa State capital, the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) has cautioned against the hawking of petrol in the state.

The Commandant in Bayelsa, Mr. Sikiru Raimi, told the *News Agency of Nigeria* (NAN) in Yenagoa that risks involved in the practice to the populace were enormous.

"We are trying to see how we can have a forum with oil dealers to tell them the risks involved in what they are doing to the society," he said.