

70-year-old man survives as fire kills six, destroys property in Rivers

From **Obinna Nwaoku**, Port Harcourt

SIX members of a family in Ngbede community, Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Council of Rivers State were, yesterday, killed in an inferno that engulfed their house. A 70-year-old man, Pa Fidelis Ezinne, who survived the incident said some of the victims were his children and grandchildren.

Narrating the incident, Ezinne said he heard sounds from a generating set in one of the rooms at about 6:30p.m., which could have triggered the explosion. He said: "I was sitting outside before my freezer blew. Then what we saw was light (explosion), which injured everybody in the vicinity.

"This was between 6:30p.m. and 7:00p.m. About six people died. My son, a woman, her child, the daughter of my wife and one other person. "If the government wants to help, let them come and help me," he pleaded.

Another witness identified as Eric said the fire was caused by electrical fault.

He said: "I was outside the house along the road when we heard people screaming fire, fire.

"Before we got there, everywhere was on fire. We rushed those affected to the hospital, but they didn't make it."

Reacting to the incident, commander of a Vigilante group in the area, God knows Nkem, advised residents to be cautious when handling flammable materials.

He said: "What happened is very regrettable at this festive period. The loss of six able men and women is unfortunate.

"I want to use this medium to advise all and sundry to be mindful of all flammable materials, especially during this festive period.

"Life is one thing that all of us must guide well. This is dry season, people should be mindful of what they use, what they keep in their houses, especially flammable materials to avoid disaster."

IN a related development, goods and property worth millions of naira were destroyed by fire at the Etche



CP Ebuka

Waterfront in Borokiri area of Port Harcourt on Christmas day.

Though the cause of the incident could not be ascertained, it was gathered that the fire occurred when residents were celebrating Christmas.

The Guardian gathered that the fire was the tenth recorded in the state in the last three months.

Contacted, the state acting spokesman for the state police command, Grace Iringe-Koko said she was yet to get a report of the incident in Ngbede community, but confirmed that some makeshifts were destroyed in a fire at Etche waterfront, saying no life was lost.