

Dusk fire kills woman, 34

DETAILS of last weekend's fire outbreak that took the life of 34-year-old Mrs. Juliet Apiafiyai in Amassoma, Bayelsa State, have emerged, as the community called for the immediate opening of a mega station in the area.

The fire, which occurred at the waterfront of Aduleama community in Amassoma in the evening, was reportedly caused by an electrical spark where jerrycans of fuel were kept.

Eye witnesses disclosed that the flame later spread to other houses around the vicinity.

About 14 houses, including some uncompleted buildings, were engulfed by the inferno which made many occupants of the houses to run helter-skelter.

It was in the midst of the confusion that the body of the late Mrs. Juliet was found, burnt beyond recognition.

The charred body of the woman, who was said to be one of the hawkers of fuel in the waterfront, was taken to the Amassoma General Hospital mortuary, it was learnt.

The remains have since been buried.

Besides, seven persons had severe burns from kerosene explosion in the community.

Speaking on the incidents that

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have thrown many residents of Amassoma and other communities into fear and mourning, Chief Douglas Naigba, an elder of the community, who lamented the incidents, which he said were avoidable, called on the government to open without delay a mega station that would take care of the kerosene and fuel needs of the communities in the riverside areas of the state.

Naigba, who is also an All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) chieftain in the South-South zone, and other leaders in the community, noted that if the long promised opening of the station had been fulfilled, the issue of adulterated kerosene and hawking of fuel at the riverside communities would have been a thing of the past.

"The government should build a mega station to assist in the supply of petrol and kerosene in the state," they appealed.

For some years now, many poverty-stricken families in the riverside communities have resorted to selling fuel in jerrycans.

The fuel, which is often sold at very cheap prices, is got from the popular "Asari fuel market," which gets its supply from illegal bunkerers.

It is usually the past-time of many residents of the riverside communities to engage in the illegal hawking of fuel as a means of survival.

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo had, before the end of his administration, promised to establish a mega station somewhere in-between Amassoma and the state capital, Yenagoa.

But, the promise was not fulfilled.

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