

Ebonyi gas explosion: One dead, nine others injured

by **Grace Egbo** October 19, 2024 in **Metro** Reading Time: 3 mins read

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Miss Mary Cynthia Ikelegu, a victim of a gas explosion, has been confirmed dead.

Ikelegu passed away on Saturday evening at the Accident and Emergency Unit of the Alex Ekwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital, Abakaliki (AE-FUTHA), Ebonyi State.

Tribune Online gathered that the late Ikelegu was severely burnt alongside nine other students when the explosion occurred in the kitchen of the Good Shepherd Catering School, which is affiliated with the Catholic Church in the state.

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The catering school is located at the SPA axis of Orokeonuoha in the Abakaliki local government area.

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According to eyewitnesses, the incident transpired when one of the students answered a call in the kitchen while cooking with a gas cylinder, resulting in severe burns to ten individuals, some of whom were burnt beyond recognition.

The victims were initially taken to the police clinic at the police headquarters in Abakaliki for treatment before being referred to the Alex Ekwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital in the metropolis.

Mary Cynthia Ikelegu was among five victims who had been on life support machines at the hospital since Thursday morning when the incident occurred.

Among those affected by the disaster is 17-year-old Chisom Nwizi, the daughter of Emmanuel Nwizi, a staff member of the Nigeria Television Authority in Abakaliki.

Nwizi expressed hope for his daughter's recovery despite her severe burns and called on the government and benevolent individuals to assist them.

"I received a call around 6:30 AM that the kitchen section of Good Shepherd Catering School had been engulfed in fire, and I rushed to the scene immediately because my daughter is one of the students there," he said.

"When I arrived, I saw students discussing in groups. One of them mentioned that it was the carelessness of one student, stating that if she hadn't entered the kitchen with her phone, the incident wouldn't have happened.

"I moved further into the school and learnt that the victims had been taken to the police clinic. I quickly rushed there, only to be informed they had been transferred to the Accident and Emergency Unit of AE-FUTHA.

"When I got to the hospital, it was very severe. Ten students were affected, and five of them are still on life support machines.

"My daughter sustained severe burns, but I remain hopeful that she will survive. The school authorities have been supportive; they have not asked any parent to bring money, stating they would focus on saving lives first before engaging parents for any contributions.

"I commend the efforts of the Reverend Sisters managing the catering school. They stayed at the hospital until midnight yesterday, and I truly appreciate their dedication."