

...fire guts building, kills two-year-old girl

NIYI ODEBODE

A FIRE outbreak has gutted a storey building at Oke-Sokori area of Abeokuta and killed a two-year-old girl.

Eyewitnesses told our correspondent on Saturday that the fire outbreak was caused by a jerry can of petrol stored in the building.

In a move to check scarcity of fuel and fire disaster, a task force set up by the state government on Saturday banned sale of fuel in jerry cans.

The Chairman of the task

force, Alhaji Lamidi Odulanwa, announced the ban at a meeting with Independent Petroleum Marketers of Nigeria and tanker drivers in Abeokuta.

At the meeting, participants accused the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation of selling fuel in jerry cans.

The participants said apart from worsening fuel scarcity, selling fuel in jerry cans could lead to fire disasters.

The burnt house, which is in Lanlepe Compound, Oke Sokori, was said to be

quite close to President Olusegun Obasanjo's residence in Abeokuta.

The eyewitnesses said the girl, identified as Blessing, and three other children, were trapped in the building when the fire started.

While the three other children were rescued by sympathizers, the baby was burnt beyond recognition.

The first floor of the building was razed by the fire. Occupants of the ground floor were, however, lucky as they brought out some of their belongings.

Men of the state fire service arrived in the area 30

minutes after the fire outbreak. They, however, ran out of water shortly after their arrival.

Before officers of the fire service could bring another vehicle, the first floor of the building had been razed.

Meanwhile, there were long queues of vehicles in few filling stations that were selling fuel in Abeokuta on Saturday.

Roads in the town were almost deserted as many taxis cars queued at filling stations. Taxi fares were increased from N20 to N30.