

Varsity student dies in Calabar kerosene explosion

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Ogolo Eke

Mudiaga Affe, Calabar

A 100-level student at the Cross River University of Technology, Calabar, Ogolo Eke, has died after a kerosene explosion in her house in the Eight Miles area of Calabar.

The 21-year-old student of the Department of Microbiology was reportedly burnt beyond recognition by the fire, which was suspected to have been caused by adulterated kerosene.

PUNCH Metro learnt on Thursday that Ogolo was among the 5,500 freshmen that participated in CRUTECH's matriculation on April 9.

A witness, Mr. Ekere Kelvin, said Ogolo was trying to refill a lantern with kerosene around 7.45pm on Wednesday when the incident occurred.

He said the victim was rushed to a private hospital in Calabar in critical condition, but she could not survive the severe burns.

Kelvin said, "We heard a sound from her room. Before we got there, the smoke had already covered the room. We tried to help her, but her face and chest had been burnt. She died on Thursday. She was badly burnt by the fire."

A family member, Felix Eke, said Ogolo's death dealt a big blow to the family.

"We feel very sad and my parents have been devastated. She had been searching for this admission for over four years, but could not get it. She just got this one and matriculated two weeks ago. She died in a mysterious circumstance. We are grieving," he said.

Meanwhile, it was learnt that there was another kerosene explosion in a house around the Eight Mile area.

A witness, Ignatius Agbama, who also knew about Ogolo's case, said a teacher was injured in that incident.

"The female teacher is my neighbour. She was injured in the explosion. That explosion occurred a few hours after Ogolo's room was gutted by fire. This is the sixth incident this year alone and we have stopped patronising black marketers for kerosene. We now buy directly from the filling stations.

"There is something wrong with the supply system because a lot of people have died. Recently, a mother of three and her two children were burnt to death. The Department of Petroleum Resources need to do something urgently about this ugly trend," he said.

The state Chairman of the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria, Mr. Lawrence Agim, expressed sadness over incessant kerosene explosions in the state.

Agim, who vowed to ensure that the circulation of adulterated kerosene was checked, explained that many families had been affected by explosions in recent time.

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