

Four burnt, 40 injured in Benue tanker explosion

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(File photo)

John Charles, Makurdi

No fewer than four persons were on Sunday burnt beyond recognition with 40 others sustaining burns after a petroleum tanker exploded in the Ushongo Local Government Area of Benue State.

The victims were said to be scooping fuel from a fallen petroleum tanker when it exploded.

Our correspondent learnt that the incident happened at Gbatse settlement in the council area.

Several houses located near the scene of the explosion, as well as motorcycles, were torched by the fire.

A source at the scene said, “Some residents of the area had rushed to scoop fuel after the tanker fell. Unfortunately, the tanker later exploded.”

The fire, which started around 10am, was said to have lasted many hours, which made rescue difficult.

However, some residents said shots fired by some security operatives to scare away those scooping fuel caused the explosion.

Some of the victims with severe burns were taken to the Benue State University Teaching Hospital for treatment on the directive of the state governor, Samuel Ortom.

When our correspondent visited the hospital on Tuesday, about 20 victims were seen being attended to by a team of medical doctors.

The Chief Medical Director of the hospital, Dr Terlumun Swenden, who took the state Commissioner for Health and Human Services, Dr Cecilia Ojobo, round the Accident and Emergency ward, said the medical team of the hospital was doing its best to save lives despite the ongoing strike by members of JOHESU.

He said, “The governor directed that victims with severe burns be brought to this hospital.

“I have to make serious efforts to bring together the medical team to assist and save lives. As you can see, doctors are attending to the victims; but it is a serious case.