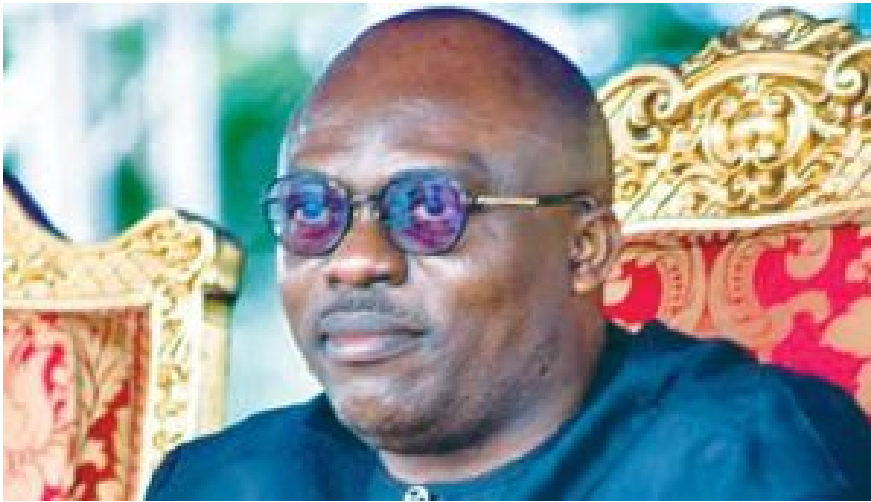


# Govt mourns as Rivers gas explosion death toll hits five

17th January 2025



By Dennis Naku

Kindly share this story:



The Rivers State Government has mourned the death of five victims after a gas refilling shop exploded inflicting multiple injuries on many in the Orazi area of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State following the death of the shop owner on Wednesday after succumbing to injuries.

Four persons including a man simply identified as Ayo and his daughter had given up the ghost previously, with the latest bringing the total death figure to five (two males and three females).

*PUNCH Metro* recalls that 18 persons suffered various degrees of burns when the incident occurred over a fortnight ago.

The family of one of the victims who pleaded anonymity due to the sensitive nature of the incident disclosed the death of the shop owner to our correspondent in Port Harcourt on Thursday, saying the victim, identified as Chidi, passed on Wednesday evening at the Rivers State University Teaching Hospital in Port Harcourt.

He stated, “The owner of the gas shop just gave up on Wednesday night. His name is Mr Chidi. Already, we lost Ayo and his daughter and the other girl, Chinda. There is a young girl, and her mother, who is a widow, are also dead. But the rest are responding to treatment.”

He however said the cost of treatment is biting hard on them and called for the state government to come to the aid of the other hospitalised victims.

“It is just that we have to go to the next level of care which is quite expensive in terms of dressing, high level of antibiotics with some costing up to N25,000 each person and each has to take like three bottles per day.”

He said the other hospitalised victims have yet to receive any financial support apart from the initial support given to them by the Chairman of Obio/Akpor LGA, Chijioke Ihunwo.

He faulted claims that the state government was providing the victims with free medical care, saying, “Except for the N1m given to all the patients, the government is supposed to intervene but we don’t know.”

## Related News

Govt mourns as Rivers gas explosion death toll hits five

Cholera kills nine in Rivers

Knocks, praises trail Rivers LG chair's 130 special assistant appointments

But addressing newsmen at her office in Port Harcourt on Thursday, the Commissioner for Health, Dr Adaeze Oreh, insisted that the state government was footing the medical bills for all the victims of the tragic incident brought to the Rivers State University Teaching Hospital.

Oreh also confirmed the death of the fifth (owner of the gas refilling shop) victim which she described as painful but explained that neither he nor any of the dead victims passed on as a result of lack of care, as they were given prompt response and top-notch treatment.

“Regarding the recent tragic gas explosion that had multiple members of the Orazi community severely injured and some in very critical condition, last week, I accompanied the Deputy Governor to visit the patients at the Rivers State University Teaching Hospital.

“We saw all the patients on admission and prayed that all the patients who had survived till that point would still be with us today.”

The commissioner however said some of the victims had what she described as ‘such extensive burns’ but that even with that, the government was still hopeful that they would make it.

“The Rivers State University Teaching Hospital was charged to ensure that every treatment that was necessary from that moment will be borne by the government and no additional burden placed on the families to raise funds for either the medicines or whatever infusion or other commodities that are needed.

“So, for the individual who passed on, the individual did not pass on because of the lack of care or lack of access to the necessary medicines; but purely because if you know how burns work, they deplete the surface area and the individual loses so massively that even with the most advanced treatment, sometimes, it is difficult for the body to recover sufficiently and survive.

“So, we mourn that loss but I want to reassure the public that the government is doing everything to ensure that those who are alive and have survived have access to the care that they need. Government is bearing that responsibility.”