

Cooking stove explosion kills four in Rivers

27th April 2025



Web Photo: Cooking stove

By Dennis Naku

The police have confirmed the death of four persons in an explosion at a residential area in Omoku, headquarters of Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Sunday PUNCH gathered that the explosion, which occurred around 11am on Saturday, resulted from a cooking stove placed near illegally refined petroleum products in one of the rooms in the building.

According to sources, a woman in the building was cooking noodles close to the inflammable products.

Three occupants of the building and a woman who came to purchase condensate were burnt to death.

The spokesperson for the state police command, Grace Iringe-Koko, confirmed the incident and the casualties, saying an investigation was ongoing.

“What really caused the fire was that a resident brought a cooking stove to the place and was preparing noodles, which ignited the fire.”

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“She and three other women were burnt beyond recognition and sadly lost their lives, including one of them that came to buy condensate (illegally refined kerosene). Investigation is ongoing,” she said.

An environmentalist and Executive Director of Youths and Environmental Advocacy Centre, Dr Fyनेface Dumnamene, also confirmed the incident in a statement sent to newsmen.

Dumnamene alleged that the occupants usually bought illegally refined kerosene and other products, stored them, and resold them to members of the public.

While warning against pipeline vandalism and illegal refining, he called on the Federal Government to legalise modular refineries in the region to forestall such unfortunate incidents.

“The inferno is said to have occurred in a house where people purchased and stored illegally refined petroleum products, including condensate, for resale in the area.

“We call for a thorough investigation into the incident and warn residents and youths against involvement in pipeline vandalism, crude oil theft, artisanal refineries, and trading in illegally refined petroleum products, including home storage, to avoid ugly incidents of this nature,” he added.