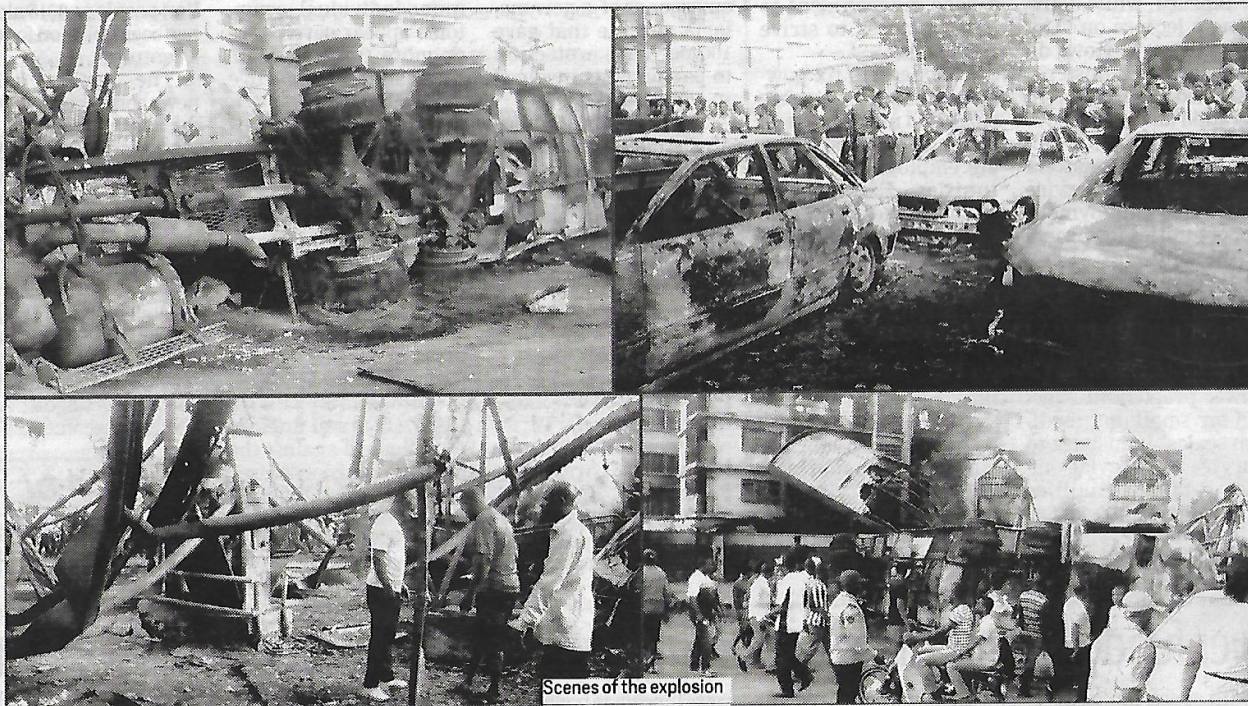


Five-year-old boy dies in Onitsha explosion

...filling station, posh cars, 10 houses burnt



Okegwoko Kenekwoku
ONITSHA

A five-year-old boy lost his life in Onitsha, Anambra State when a tanker carrying Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) com-

monly known as fuel lost control and rammed into a filling station.

Also, property and goods worth several millions of naira were destroyed in the incident.

The resultant fire burnt the tanker, the filling station, seven vehicles (among them

posh cars), two tricycles and 10 houses.

The incident occurred at the DMGS area about 8:30p.m. on Wednesday.

An 80-year-old man, identified as Pa Solo, from Agulu community, Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambra State,

was rescued by sympathisers who immediately rushed to his house.

Pa Solo, as he fondly called, is the owner of the moribund popular Solo Supermarket on Upper New Market Road, Onitsha.

He was said to be the only person in his flat located in his

three-storey building as his family members were not around.

A witness, Mr. Chikwekwu, an Onitsha resident, said he was inside Saints Cathedral Church about 100 metres away from the scene when he saw thick cloud of smoke and fire.

Ekwekwu said he rushed to the scene and with the assistance of three other youths, they were able to rescue Pa Solo.

He disclosed that the explosion, however, sustained no injuries as he was too far to walk.

Ekwekwu added that he had to evacuate his family members to safety.

It was learnt that the five-year-old boy died when his uncle, who was trying to save him from fire, him.

The little boy died instantly.

An office building known as "Kamo Plaza" which houses First Bank and Fidelity Bank, as well as other offices was also damaged, although the raging fire spread to other residential and commercial houses.

Unfortunately, fire service officials, who arrived the scene after several hours, were unable to have complained of short water. They soon left when they exhausted the water in their truck.

It was the efforts of the sympathisers which eventually put out the fire.

Meanwhile, Governor Willie Obiano has said that his government would relocate the filling stations affected by the Onitsha fire incident and the victims within the area.

Obiano, who spoke yesterday when he flew in from Abuja, was escorted to the scene of the incident by the Obi of Onitsha, Alfred Achebe, Commander of the Onitsha Artillery Regiment, Colonel Agisit Akpan and Commander of the Navy Out Post, Onitsha, Captain Mohammed Dal...

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