

Family Loses 4 Children to Fire Incident in Delta

Following the scarcity of kerosene in Edo and Delta States, four siblings on Monday were reportedly burnt to death in Oghara, Delta State, in a fire incident allegedly caused by adulterated kerosene.

Two other children from the same family and their mother, identified simply as Edna, who sustained serious burns also from the fire, are now on danger list at the intensive care unit of the Accident and Emergency ward of the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) in Benin-City, Edo State.

THISDAY investigations revealed that a four-litre quantity of the product now sells for between N3,000 and N3,200, which is the "black-market" price as the product has not been available at filling stations in the area for nearly two weeks. The official price of a litre of the product in the country is about N50.

The surviving victims were rushed to the hospital owing to the seriousness of the burns with the assistance of sympathizers and neighbours.

*From Omon-Julius Onabu in Warri
and Adibe Emeyonnu in Benin-City*

The father of the six victims of the kerosene fire, THISDAY gathered, is a policeman attached to one of the police formations in Warri, Delta State.

THISDAY gathered that the incident occurred on Monday night at the family's residence in Oghara, Ethiope West Local Government area of the state.

It was learnt that the woman, a petty trader who also sells kerosene among other articles, was about to light her kerosene lantern when it suddenly exploded and an ensued fire engulfed her residence.

Attempts made by her neighbours to rescue the victims failed and in the process, four of the six children were burnt to death.

The National Coordinator of the Save Accident Victims of Nigeria (SAVAN), Dr. Eddy Ehikhamenor, who was on hand to receive the victims, said the mother and her two children had over 85 per cent degrees of burns.

The SAVAN boss, who

described the incident as "very pathetic", advised kerosene users to always carry out simple tests on the kerosene they purchase before usage.

He listed such tests to include visual and nasal test; that is, the use of the eyes and smell to ascertain whether the product was actually kerosene.

He said they could thus ascertain whether the colour of the kerosene was golden or light yellow, saying nasal examination could indicate if the kerosene's smell is irritating, pungent or choking, an indication that such product was fuel and not kerosene.

Ehikhamenor also said kerosene users should put a drop of the product on their skin to see if it would evaporate fast, adding that once the product evaporates very fast, it was an indication that it was adulterated and very volatile.

He also warned against the sale of adulterated kerosene to consumers by retailers and marketers all in their bid to maximize profit.