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 - [Headlines](#)
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 - [Finance](#)
- [Technology](#)
- [Politics](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
 - [Latest Gist](#)
 - [Celebrities](#)
 - [Music](#)
 - [Videos](#)
 - [Events](#)
- [Style](#)
 - [Fashion Flair](#)
 - [Fashion Personality](#)
 - [My Style](#)
 - [Allure](#)
- [Viewpoints](#)
- [Editorial](#)

Pregnant woman, son & 2 others killed in Bayelsa inferno

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By Samuel Oyadongha, Yenagoa

It was all tears Monday at the Onopa suburb of Yenagoa the Bayelsa State when the charred remains of a pregnant woman and her three year old son were evacuated from the scene of Sunday night inferno in which two other persons reportedly from injuries sustained at the hospital.

No fewer than fifty buildings mostly shanties were razed down with properties worth several millions of naira destroyed.

Most of the families that were displaced by the inferno which swept through the densely populated settlement Sunday night could not salvage anything from their homes as they were left with the clothes on them.



Charred remain of burnt structures in Yenagoa inferno

The tragic inferno occurred in the densely populated slum Sunday night between 7.30 and 8pm

The deceased pregnant woman identified as Mrs. Benita Olotu and her three year old son Paul were reportedly sleeping in their room ostensibly due to tiredness as she was said to have just returned from Delta State where she had gone to bury her mother.

It was, however, the believe of many that the deceased woman and her son might have been trapped inside their apartment by smoke due to the congested nature of the sprawling slum which was completely razed down by the inferno..

Vanguard gathered that men of the State Fire Service, who raced to the scene could not contain the raging inferno as their truck had no water, a development that angered sympathizers who thronged the scene to assist the shop owners to salvage what they could of their wares.

Eyewitnesses told Vanguard that the inferno started from the room of a lady simply identified as Tari, who deals in adulterated kerosene.

It was learnt that trouble started when the said lady wanted to refuel a running generator shortly after power outage in the neighbourhood without switching it off.

The generator according to sources exploded. The lady reportedly rescued her son and fled the burning room without raising any alarm to draw the attention of other neighbours who could have assisted in battling the inferno and prevented it from spreading to other surrounding shanties.

There was little or nothing neighbours and sympathizers could do when they noticed the raging fire which was fast spreading and engulfed the entire settlement.

The supermarkets and other big retail outlets in front of the sprawling shanties were not spared as they were completely razed down.

A lady who gave her name as Charity John, clad in a wrapper, who lost the sum of N280,000 allegedly withdrew weekend from the bank for business transaction added that all she could salvage from her apartment was her handset while another victim, Corporal Arikpo Efut said, "I lost all my properties to the inferno."

Governor Timipre Sylva who visited the scene of the incident expressed sadness over the development and assured the victims of government assistance.

He asked for the compilation of the list of the victims for government to provide needed assistance to mitigate their sufferings.

Chief Sylva said the government would acquire the plots of land for construction of modern structures even as he blamed the magnitude of destruction on the violation of planning rules on the part of the landlords making it difficult for fire fighters to access the area.

As at press time some residence who had nothing on them were seen begging sympathizers to assist them with money to buy food.

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