

J'aime

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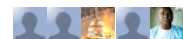
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Black Saturday in P/Harcourt: Family of five wiped out in tanker fire

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15 houses razed, scores injured Gov Ama

BY JIMITOTA ONOYUME

A family of five and two others were confirmed dead in an inferno, yesterday, after a petrol tanker lost control on Igwuruta round about, spilling its content and bursting into flames. Eye witnesses said the death toll could be higher.

They claimed scores of persons also sustained first degree burns and were rushed to hospital.

According to them, the accident occurred at about 4a.m. when most residents were still asleep. Those who were roasted, the eye witnesses said, died in their sleep.



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They said the tanker suddenly went up in flames when it fell, adding that about 15 houses were razed subsequently. The driver of the tanker was said to have survived but reportedly suffered serious burns. He escaped when he saw the damage from the accident.



The Port Harcourt inferno

One of the eye witnesses, who gave his name as Chijioke, said timely intervention of residents helped to reduce the damage caused by the inferno. He said they mobilised with buckets of water and detergent to fight the fire. He said though their effort did not completely put out the fire, it brought it under control.

A female resident, who lamented the impact of the inferno, expressed dissatisfaction with the response of the fire service. According to her, when they contacted the fire service at the International Airport, Omagwa, about fifteen minutes drive from the scene of the incident, they were told that they did not have the capacity to respond to the fire.

She said it took over two hours before two fire fighting vehicles could come from the state government fire service, a situation that provoked those around.

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Gov Amaechi of Rivers State and his aides during a visit to the scene of the accident.

Another source said local emergency respondents and aggrieved residents on ground had to vent their anger by throwing stones at the fire fighters for coming late. They said their coming was no longer useful because several persons had died from the raging fire.

Four vehicles parked around the area were among the items consumed by the fire.

Rivers State Commissioner for Special Duties, Mr Emeka Worgu, who raced to the scene, described the incident as very painful. He said he was also not happy with the attack on fire fighters that came to rescue the situation.

Chairman of Ikwerre local government, Mr Welendu Amadi, also lamented the sad development. Amadi said the government would assist victims.



One of the affected houses.

The ugly incident caused a gridlock in the area as those heading to the International Airport were stranded for several hours. At press time, there was still smouldering fire in the area. More security men had been deployed to the area to guarantee law and order.

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Man_Enough

It's high time we start trying government officials who ignore their duties to the extent that people lose their lives. Maybe somebody diverted the money that should be used to purchase equipment and consumables into his pocket.

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So sad about this ugly incident again in Nigeria.
How long will this kind of recklessness stop happening in this part of the world.
I think is high time communities take charge of their areas and guide it with iron gates so that this reckless and inhuman tanker drivers etc, will not be able to enter their areas!
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