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Mother of 3 loses 2 daughters in fuel fire

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By NWABUEZE OKONKWO

ONITSHA— It was a black Tuesday night for Mrs. Patience Egwuonwu, a widow and orphan from Amaudara village, Awkuzu in Oyi Local Government Area of Anambra State as she watched helplessly while her two daughters got roasted alive in a fire incident that gutted her bedroom.

Her nightmare did not stop at that. She is currently battling for survival and that of her only surviving son at St. Charles Boromeo Hospital, Onitsha where they are lying unconscious at the intensive care unit.

The fire outbreak, according to sources, began at about 9 p.m from a candle light which ignited the Premium Motor Spirit, PMS (Petrol) which she kept inside her bedroom.

According to the source, Patience was a black market petrol seller at Awkuzu and she used to store her unsold stock outside her four-room apartment but when she discovered that village thieves usually steal some of the fuel at night, she now resorted to keeping unsold stock inside her bedroom, for safety.

The source stated that having found out that the new arrangement was more favourable to her, she now adopted the idea and kept storing fuel inside her bedroom at night after she closed for the day's business and brought them out for sale during business hours.

But on the fateful night, when she had retired from business for the day and stored her unsold stock under her bedroom, as usual, all her three children, including six year-old Emeka (male), four year-old Blessing (female) and two year-old Ezinne (female) were already asleep inside the bedroom and she was also about to lie down when all of a sudden, a stick of a burning candle she lit fell off from the table on the mattress.

As she was struggling to extinguish the candle fire from the mattress, it was gathered, the flame which had already torched the mattress, sparked off fire underneath where the petrol was stored and within a twinkle of an eye, the whole bedroom was ablaze.

The source also hinted that out of confusion, she started shouting for help and before the neighbourhood could rush, her two daughters, Blessing and Ezinne, had already been roasted by the inferno, while the woman and her son, Emeka were rescued.

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