

Kerosene explosion kills family of 4 in Calabar

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By Emma Una

A 45-year-old man, Esuabana Okon, two of his children, Okon Esua (14), Edet Esua (13) and his in-law, Monday night, died in a fire disaster reportedly caused by adulterated kerosene in Ikot Ekpo community in Calabar, Cross River State capital.

Esuabana's wife and the daughter that survived the inferno are said to be receiving medical attention at the Calabar General Hospital.

The landlord, Efiom Offiong Efanga, who claimed he was yet to pack into the building, said: "I had a call at about a minute to 10 O'clock that there was a fire outbreak in my compound so I had to rush down here. By the time I got here, the neighbours had succeeded in putting out the fire but they did not know initially that people had actually been burnt inside because it seems there were no cry from within.

"It was after the fire was extinguished that we discovered three persons were already dead inside. Another victim, who was also fatally burnt, was rushed to the hospital but he gave up the ghost on the way and so his dead body was brought back. The only survivor among the children is the daughter."

He said the girl told him that her mother asked the elder brother to refuel the lantern but the boy refused and went inside, and that after some minutes, the mum decided to send her to refuel the lantern and that as soon as she poured the kerosene into the already lit but dim lantern, there was a huge explosion so she threw the lantern away and ran out. She said the mother was outside easing herself when the explosion occurred.

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Also speaking, a relative to the Esuabanas, Mr Samuel Inyang, described the incident as mysterious, adding that what surprised everyone was how the girl could run out while his father and the other three could not, even when the door was opened.

Inyang, who suspected that the kerosene might have been adulterated, appealed to relevant government agencies to intensify efforts at bringing to an end the case of petroleum bunkering, which he said encouraged dealers to mix all types of things with kerosene.

Efforts to speak with the state Police Public Relations Officer did not yield any results as she did not answer calls on her mobile phone number.

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