

4 children electrocuted in Ondo

****2 siblings involved were on Easter holiday ***We sympathise with victims family—BEDC*

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By Dayo Johnson, Akure

Four children, including two siblings, were electrocuted in Oke Aigo area in Ile-Oluji/Okeigbo council area of Ondo State after a newly installed 11kv power line fell on the container where they were playing.

Vanguard gathered that the container was used as a shop by the parents of one of the victims.

The two siblings, it was gathered, went to visit the owner of the container, who is their aunt.

Eyewitness account said the children were playing inside the container turned shop when the power line cable fell on it.

Narrating how he escaped, one of the survivors, identified as Blessing, said: “We were playing and suddenly, power was restored. Immediately, we heard the sparkling sound and we ran out of the shop, not knowing that the new cable wire had cut and fell on my mummy’s container shop.

“As we ran out of the container, the wire trapped our legs and we could not walk again. So, I sat on the plank that was close to me, but the remaining children started shaking and vomiting blood.

“I shouted for help and people came to rescue us and we were rushed to the General Hospital, Ile-Oluji.”

Also, speaking, the owner of the shop, Ronke Adebisi, said she was not present when the incident occurred.

She said: “In the evening, I received a call that my shop was burning. I ran down to check on my children. On getting there, I saw people gathered and I kept asking: ‘Where are my children?’

“Later, one of them, Blessing, ran out of the shop, but the others were lying on the floor.

“They were rushed to the hospital, but there was no sufficient oxygen they could use for five of them. So, four later gave up the ghost. But the case of the sixth child was not critical as she can walk and talk.

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“The remaining two were taken to Trauma Centre in Ondo. One has been discharged, but the second child has been referred to OAU Teaching Hospital. Two of the four children are my sister’s daughter. They came for holiday.”

Speaking on the incident, the senator representing Ondo South, Nicholas Tofowomo, said he would ensure that the parents of the victims get justice if the BEDC were found culpable in the tragedy.

Tofowomo said: “We cannot allow lawlessness to continue in this country. I will pursue justice for the parents, if investigations showed culpability of the BEDC.” Also, reacting, Corporate Affairs Manager, BEDC Electricity Plc, in the state, Michael Barnabas, condoled with the family of the victims.

Barnabas said the children were electrocuted “within our network in Ile-Oluji due to an 11kv line that snapped.”

According to information available to us, the children were in an iron container shop that was directly under an 11kv line that snapped, which led to their electrocution when they had contact with the wire.

“The deaths would have been avoidable if there was nothing within the 11-metre right of way statutorily required for such line.

“While we don’t have the powers to relocate people directly living or trading under our electricity lines, we shall be very brutal in disconnecting such customers from the public power supply and ensure they never have access to it again, which would probably lead to them relocating voluntarily out of the harm’s way. By this, we believe we can prevent future occurrence of similar sad incidents.”

The state police image maker, Funmi Odunlami, confirmed the death of the victims and described it as unfortunate.