



## **Onitsha Fire Incident: Woman, child killed, 500 shops, forty buildings, razed**

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### **NIGERIA: -**

A woman and her child had been confirmed dead, while three others were said to have died at different locations in the area.

Forty buildings and scores of shops were also torched in the disaster caused by the derailing of a tanker loaded with petrol.

Speaking about the ugly incident, a passerby said "Over 500 lock-up shops were gutted by fire on Iweka Street Market leading to Ochanja and Menax markets.

"The incident started when a tanker laden with petrol lost control around Toronto Hospital and veered off the service lane. The tanker fell from the vehicle and went up in flames after spilling its content."

It was gathered that the woman carrying her baby tried to jump out of her shop but missed her steps and fell into a gutter raging with fire.

Residents, including the old and children in most of the buildings, were trapped as youths had a hectic time rescuing

them.

An eyewitness who said the fire started at about 10 am, explained that there was no presence of fire service personnel on hand.

The state police command confirmed the death of the woman and her child

The police spokesperson, Haruna Mohammed, in a statement said the woman and her child were burnt beyond recognition, adding that their remains had been deposited in a nearby morgue.

The statement read in part, "Today (Wednesday) a trailer loaded with petroleum product lost control at Upper Iweka, on the Enugu-Onitsha Expressway, Onitsha and crashed inside a pavement in between the expressway.

"As a result, the fire spilled over through the gutter and affected many shops and houses.

"The Commissioner of Police, John Abang visited the scene for an on-the-spot assessment and appealed to the residents to remain calm. Fire Service department was equally contacted.

"A yet-to-be identified woman and her baby caught up by the inferno and burnt beyond recognition were rushed to Toronto Hospital but were certified dead by a medical doctor.

It was also gathered that a police patrol team had cordoned off the area to prevent hoodlums from taking advantage of the situation to loot while effort was ongoing to put out the fire.