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Countryman

2 brothers, guard electrocuted

TWO brothers and a security guard were last Sunday electrocuted in Port Harcourt, Rivers State and Ikeja, Lagos State respectively.

The mother of the late brothers, it was learnt escaped death but suffered severe burns from the electric shocks.

An eye witness, who does not want his name in print said the two brothers identified simply as Endurance, 22 and Ajemina, 20 were electrocuted while adjusting a television antennae pole near a live wire of the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN).

He also told our reporter that the brothers were electrocuted while trying to get clear reception for an English Premiership match.

Our source said that Endurance died first while trying to adjust the television pole that touched the live wire only for his younger brother who went on rescue mission also died from electric shock at Abonnema Wharf Waterfront, Port Harcourt. The incident happened about 6.30 pm.

Our correspondent gathered that their mother got burnt when making efforts to remove the burnt bodies from the pole before she was thrown off by electric currents.

The incident forced PHCN to throw the neighbourhood into darkness for hours, just as the injured woman is now receiving treatment in an undisclosed hospital.

Contacted, Police Public Relations Officer, Rivers State Command, Mrs. Rita Abbey, deputy superintendent confirmed the incident, saying the corpses had been deposited at undisclosed mortuary.

She blamed the incident on carelessness and negligence as residents built houses close to high tension electric wires.

In Lagos, a 28-year old security guard with Stop Guard, John Ojete, was



electrocuted while plucking mango fruits for breakfast.

Ojete, an indigene of Adolo Local Government Area of Benue State, got himself electrocuted about 8:30a.m in Oregun area of Ikeja local government of Lagos state.

Daily champion learnt that Ojete was deployed by his company, Stop Guard to premises said to belong to Dudu where he eventually died while plucking mango fruit.

Our reporter learnt that Ojete had successfully climbed and plucked some fruits when he sighted some other riped ones. "We heard him call on his colleagues to assist him with a rod," an eyewitness told our reporter, adding that the deceased must have had contact with the 11/33 kva cable belonging to PHCN.

A witness said some of his colleagues who offered to assist him extended an iron rod to him, "The rod with which he used to pluck the mango apparently touched the a naked wire.

Another eyewitness, Mr. Victor Alogba told the *Daily Champion*, "John's iron rod touched the cable and in a twinkle of an eye, the once able bodied, energetic man became lifeless."

Yussuf Usman, another eyewitness who spoke with *Daily Champion*, however, blamed the death on the lukewarm attitude of the police and officials of PHCN.

His words, "I reside within this compound. I saw him as I went out. I was just behind the gate. I have not spent up to two minutes, when his colleagues who saw his predicament alerted me.

"We immediately swung into action, trying to rescue him. We tried to remove the rod, but it was difficult. As at that time he wasn't dead."

He said: "We did all we could to save him to no avail. We had to use a wooden stick and aluminium ladder to get the rod off him. Then, we rushed to NEPA (PHCN) office to have them put off the light. We pleaded with the officials on ground to disconnect the area, so that we could bring him down, but they did not respond to our plea"

"We also contacted the police, but they put up a lackadaisical attitude. If they had responded early enough, we could have saved him."

The head of the fire servicemen that removed the corpse, Assistant Chief Fire Officer Ojo said: "We were in the office this morning (yesterday) when a police officer from Alausa rushed to our office, alerting us of the incident.

"We moved here immediately and on our way coming, we informed the PHCN of our mission and implored them to have the electricity current

switched off. We met the deceased hooked atop the mango tree. But we needed the PHCN cooperation in doing this kind of job, because we couldn't endanger the lives of our men."

Ojo advised that the residents seek permission from the state ministry of environment to cut the mango tree, "because nobody is allowed to cut a tree without permission in the state."

Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the Lagos State Police Command, Mr. Frank Mba confirmed the story.

He said: "When I got the information around 9:00a.m, I immediately alerted the relevant authorities and our men were swiftly drafted to the place.

"You know there is a lot of crowd, and we understand that tempers were rising, so we put our men on ground to forestall any funny action."

But the Managing Director of Dudu, a Lebanese, simply referred to as Mr. Salom would neither give his name nor comment on the issue.

When prompted, his response was, "I don't want to talk, please. The police are already on the matter. Please let us leave it that way, thank you."