

TheMetroSe

Fireworks users, smokers

Lagos orders arrest to stem fire outbreaks, records 15 fire incidents on

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**
and **Wole Oyeade**

WORRIED by the rise in fire outbreaks in the last one week, the Lagos State government yesterday ordered security operatives to begin clampdown on public smokers, as well as indiscriminate users of firecracker in the state.

The government said while the acts were prohibited by the state environmental law, such activities were often responsible for fire incidents during the dry season, particularly during fuel scarcity.

The state government, at a meeting of all security operatives, safety and emergency service agencies yesterday, said ignorance of the law would no longer be an excuse as the full enforcement had begun.

It would be recalled that the Lagos State Police Command in December 2014 outlawed the use of fire crackers or knockouts, popularly known as 'Biscoe and banger', because of the potential health hazard of the device to the people and the environment.

The state Commissioner

for Special Duties and Inter-governmental Relations, Oluseye Oladejo, said the danger associated with the dropping of cigarette tubs or fireworks indiscriminately, especially at this period of harmattan pose a great challenge and may lead to fire outbreak.

Oladejo said an example of the threat was the recent Ojuelegba tanker accident, where someone reportedly dropped the leftover of a cigarette into a canal where the spilled content ignited the fire. Also, the sad incident of Jankara market fire of December 2012, caused by the storage of fireworks in some shops along Ojo-Giwa Street, Lagos Island Local Council, which led to loss of lives and property worth millions of naira.

"For record purpose, the men of the Lagos State Fire Service, Emergency Team of the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA) and other responders have effectively responded to over 42 emergency calls through the toll free 767/112 emergency number of the State in the first one week of De-

cember 2015, while a total of over 1,667 emergency calls have been responded to from January 2015 to date. We responded to 15 distress calls for fire outbreaks yesterday (Monday) alone," he said.

About N16.38 billion worth of properties were lost to various fire incidents, while N98.28 billion of property were also salvaged this year alone.

The commissioner stressed that the Lagos State Smoking Regulation and Control 2014 prohibits anyone from smoking in public places. Volume 47 of the law carries a fine of N10,000 to N15,000 or one/ three months imprisonment as deemed by the court as punishment for offenders.

The Commander of the Rapid Response Squad (RRS), Olatunji Disu, warned that there would be no sacred cow as the police are set to enforce all promulgated laws in the state. Disu said the recent donation of security equipment by the state government had helped them increase surveillance and reduce robbery cases statewide.



A fire scene

1

6