

Family of six, guest die mysteriously in Oshodi

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*The premises sealed yesterday by Oshodi Local Government Area PHOTO: FEMI ADEBESIN
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Disbelief, shock and uncontrolled emotion were expressed by the throng of residents who descended on No. 19, Olowora Street, Mafoluku, Oshodi area of Lagos State yesterday. This was after one Mr. Kasim Sakariwo, an electrician popularly called Cool Money, his pregnant wife, a petty trader, their four children, three daughters, 11-year-old Aliyah; five-year-old twins, Taiye and Kehinde, nine-year-old boy, Farida and a 17-year-old female relative, all died mysteriously except one.

The cause of their strange deaths is yet to be discovered, as an autopsy has not been carried out. However, it was gathered that at about 9:00 a.m. when none of the family members had stepped out of their one-room apartment, neighbours, already worried by the strange sight, forcefully opened the door and the occupants were seen with their tongues stocked out and foams in their mouths.

The wife and twins were rushed to a nearby health centre by neighbours with the hope that they were still alive. While the wife passed on, the last born of the family and one of the twins survived.

It was gathered that the family ate rice the previous night and also served some of their neighbours. The neighbors showed up at the house yesterday morning, establishing that the deaths may not be connected to food poisoning.

When The Guardian visited the scene of the incident, it was observed that the deceased father struggled to escape the room as his body was seen at the door. It was too late as



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he didn't make it out alive.

Eyewitnesses said they suspect the family may have been killed by "a dangerous insecticide." Meanwhile, government officials from the ministry of health had evacuated the bodies.

While speaking to our reporters, friends and relatives of the deceased family urged the government to investigate the deaths of their loved ones, insisting that they might have been killed.

One of Kasim's friends, Isiaka Kilani, said: "He is my close friend and we learnt electronics together. He is a peaceful man and doesn't fight with anyone. We urge the government to investigate this mysterious death.

Also, a neighbour, Hammed said, "When we entered the room, the sight was so fearful. Some of them died on the mattress, some on the floor and Kasim was just at the door. Maybe he struggled to reach the door. Their death is a mystery and it must be uncovered."

Local council officials arrived later and sealed the building in the company of policemen from Makinde Police Station. An aggrieved resident who pleaded anonymity said, "It is wrong. Nobody is explaining anything to us. We were not even allowed to pick a pin from the building."



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The vice-chairman, Oshodi-Isolo Local Government Area, Hon. Daisi is a statement hinted that the surviving child has been referred to the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH) for treatment. He added that the police from Makinde station were investigating the cause of death and implored the public to maintain peace and order.

"The deceased, popularly called "cool money" was a contract worker of Ikeja Electricity Distribution Company (IKEDC). He was described by his co-tenants as a gentleman to the core, the reason many people were surprised about the tragic event."

Daisi also informed that the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA) which supervised the evacuation advised tenants of the house where the incident took place to restrain movement into the deceased apartment as fumigation would be carried out to prevent an outbreak of diseases.

The Guardian also gathered that the school the children were attending had opened a register for them. One of the teachers said: "This is a great loss. Four of them are in our school. They are very brilliant. One of the twins, Taiye got a scholarship because she is very brilliant."

Neighbours said they woke up at about 8:00 a.m. and efforts to get the deceased family members to open the door proved abortive. One of the neighbours, Mr. Kazeem, said: "When we did not see any of them, we decided to knock on their door but there was no

response. We forced the door open and saw the lifeless body of the husband, his wife and their children. Also, their relative, who came to visit them was among the deceased.

“There was blood coming out from the nose of the woman, and she defecated on herself. We saw a leftover cooked pot of rice, which the police took away. The others had foam on their mouths. We rushed them to the hospital but they were declared dead on arrival.”

Another neighbour, Mr. Eze, said: “I want the police to investigate these deaths. We are sad. One thing is clear that inside this compound, all of us live as one. There is love among all the tenants. The man is an electrician and his wife sells shoes and bags. They are peaceful people. Also, I know the man cannot do without using a generator. He has lived here for more than six years and he used his generator, which he kept close to his window because their side of the building is very hot.”

In another development, four persons from the College of Education, Waka-Biu in Biu Local Government Area of Borno State have been confirmed dead while 12 were hospitalised. This was after they returned from a Yankari Games Reserve field trip. It was gathered that those who lost their lives complained of abdominal pains after which they vomited blood.



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Initially, the death toll was put at nine, a figure, which the Provost of the school, Mohammed Audu, said was incorrect. Biu has been thrown into confusion in the last few days as the strange illness continues to affect mainly students of the institution.

One of the dead students, Adama Dika, is the daughter of the caretaker chairman of Biu Local Government Area, Usman Dika. The caretaker chairman confirmed that his daughter was one of the students that died of the strange ailment. The Borno State Deputy Governor, Umar Kadafur, who hails from Biu, has also confirmed the development.

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LASUTH

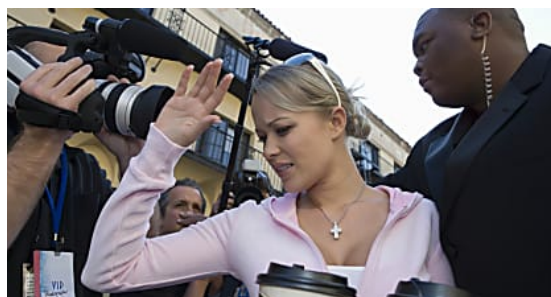
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