

## News

# Two babies dead in Ibadan fire

• Goods worth millions of naira burnt

Two children – a day-old and another, three months old, and two others – died in an inferno caused by a crashed fuel tanker in Akinyele on the outskirts of Ibadan, the Oyo State capital on Tuesday. **BISI OLADELE** reports.

**T**HE sight was grim and the scene pathetic. A mangled vehicle, human skeletons and burnt household items dotted a place that used to be a beehive of commercial activities.

The gory incident told the story of a one-day old, and another three-month old who lost their lives in a fire that gutted not less than 29 houses in Akinyele, an outskirt of Ibadan Tuesday night.

The fire also claimed two others. Besides, another victim is fighting for his life at the University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan.

The fire burnt a Mercedes Benz car, six deep freezers and property worth N50 billion. One million naira belonging to a cattle trader was also said to



• The scene of the fire. . . on Tuesday.

PHOTO: BISI OLADELE

have been consumed in the inferno.

According to eyewitnesses, the man dared the fire by running into the house on discovering the fire but ran out again when he discovered that the cash had been burnt.

The fire, which, eyewitnesses said, started at 8:30p.m., was ignited by a fully-loaded fuel tanker which veered from the road and tumbled into a ditch. Then a loud bang. The content of the trailer flowed through the drainage, transporting the fire to nearby houses and property.

A resident, Mr Rasaki Kuku said: "We were in front of our house relaxing at 8:30p.m., when a tanker loaded with fuel overtook another tanker. In the process, they had contact and one of them fell off the road. Immediately, we heard a deafening noise as the tanker emptied its contents which flowed through a gutter. All of a sudden, fire came from nowhere and burnt these houses."

As at pres time, residents and

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sympathisers still gathered at different locations counting their losses. The mangled trunk of the tanker and skeletons of its driver and assistant lay on the ground, drawing tears from sympathizers and passers-by.

However, some survivors were still salvaging some of their items that survived the inferno.

Mrs Adijat Usman, who spoke on behalf of the family said: "We had just finished praying.

We were inside, eating our dinner when we heard a loud noise. As we ran out of the house to see what happened, we saw fuel trailed by fire streaming down the gutter. All of us ran away."

Men of the state fire service, however, curtailed the fire from ravaging the entire village.

Director of Fire Services Mr Gbolagade Oladiipo confirmed on phone that the distress call came at 8:35 pm from the Divi-

sional Police Officer (DPO) of Moniya station.

He said on getting to the scene of the incident, his men discovered that a part of the village had already been gutted but worked hard to prevent it from spreading further.

He said: "We met part of the village already burning. All we did was to disallow the fire from spreading to other houses. A driver, his assistant and one old man were already dead."

Early callers at the scene were the Deputy Governor of Oyo State, Alhaji Taofeek Arapaja and Alhaji Haruna Katsina, leader of the Hausa community in the area.

Arapaja promised the community of government's assistance after briefing the governor.

Of the three victims rushed to the UCH for treatment, the one-day old gave up earlier in the day. Another died mid-day.

The third, it was gathered, was responding to treatment at the Burn Unit of the Accident and Emergency ward at the hospital.