

Mystery fire burns eight months old baby to death

A mysterious fire that gutted a storey-building along Ewemade Street off Sapele road in Benin City has killed an eight-month old baby. The fire was said to have started after many occupants of the building have left to attend the crossover service on New Year eve.

An eyewitness, who owns a shop in the building, said the fire spread rapidly before men of the Edo Fire Service arrived. The witness said properties worth millions of naira were also destroyed.

According to the witness, "The fire happened around 11pm on **Wednesday** after everyone had gone to church.

"Few minutes after power was restored after a power outage, we were about to leave the shop when we heard people shouting, fire, fire!

"Before we knew it, it had spread to other parts of the building, as if kerosene was added to it," the eyewitness said. It was learnt that the corpse of the baby has been deposited at a mortuary.

An official of the Edo State Fire Service, who identified himself as Mr Anthony Osadolor, denied allegations that the fire service delayed to arrive early to the scene after receiving calls from the victims.

"From the record I have here, there were fire incidents reported at Akpakpava and Sapele road. But I can't confirm that someone died in the incident because they did allow us to even get down from our truck; they said we came late.

"It may be that there were other fire occurrences at the same time they called. It is not our fault that we did not get there on time," he said.