

Woman, 80, dies in Lagos fire

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•The suspect...yesterday

An octogenarian was burnt to death yesterday when fire gutted her home in Maryland, Lagos.

The duplex at 5, Tola Adewunmi Street in Wasinmi, Maryland, caught fire around 4am when she and her housemaid were asleep.

The maid, simply identified as Mama Jossy, who lives in the boys quarters saw the fire and rushed upstairs to rescue her employer, but the apartment was filled with smoke.

Mama Jossy ran back to seek help. But when sympathisers, neighbours and men of the Lagos State Fire Service got to the scene, the fire had razed the octogenarian's room.

The fire was quenched and the octogenarian's body recovered.

The victim, a medical doctor, simply identified as Helen was said to have practised in Saudi Arabia but returned to Nigeria last year after her retirement.

She was said to be preparing to travel abroad on Saturday.

Her remains have been deposited in a mortuary.

A security man, who didn't give his name, said the fire occurred few minutes after power was restored.

He said her body may be taken to her home town in Delta State for burial.

An eye witness, Madam Maria Etukudoh, described the fire as "strange", saying it was the second within a year.

She added: "She returned to Nigeria for her last child's wedding and now the incident happened. Mama didn't take things for granted and whenever she saw an unusual thing, she informed an electrician to make amendment. Also, she did not allow the use of petrol in the house. Only God knows what transpired."

Few hours to the incident, the victim was said to have asked her driver to take her to her relatives' place to inform them about her planned trip.

"Mama", who lost her husband about a decade ago, was said to be billed for an operation abroad.

Lagos State Fire Service Director Razak Fadipe said preliminary investigation showed the fire was caused by power surge.