

# Father, two daughters die in generator explosion

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The victims' residence ... yesterday

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65-YEAR-OLD transporter and his two daughters were killed on Tuesday in Somolu, Lagos, when their generator exploded and caught fire.

Alhaji Kamorudeen Ajibade Shabi, Wuraola (19) and Shakirat (15) were burnt beyond recognition. Shakirat got killed when she tried to rescue her father.

The widow simply identified as Rachael, reportedly went berserk and ran out of the house naked with her last child on learning about the incident.

A family member said she had been taken to her children's house in the neighbourhood, adding: "I was on my way home when I got a phone call from my father's neighbour that my father and my step sisters have been consumed by fire. Immediately, I rushed to his residence only to see a mammoth crowd gathered in his compound, wailing. It was later I was told my father died as a result of refilling his electricity generating set, which caught fire."

The late Ajibade's daughter, Shukurat, said she was yet to believe that her father and sisters were dead.

She said: "My father is a hardworking man. He was meant to be rewarded for his effort towards the progress of transport business in Somolu when he died suddenly. He just bought a bus three weeks ago to complement the one he had before and it was from the same bus he siphoned the fuel he filled into the generating set which caught fire."

A neighbour, Rukayat Ibrahim, said when the late Alhaji returned from work, he asked his daughter to prepare him tea, adding: "As Shakirat put the water on a stove, her father was filling their generator beside her but they did not know the generator was leaking. Wuraola was standing beside her father with her phone's light pointing at the generator. That is all I could remember. I don't even want to think about it. It is a big loss to this community."

The late Shakirat was said to have run out of the room when she heard a loud noise from the backyard where her father and sister were filling their generator.

"She went inside to get milk for the tea before she heard the loud noise. She saw her father and sister burning and as she tried to save her father who was close to her, she fell and was also consumed. It is an awful experience. They were burnt beyond recognition. Even before the fire fighters gained access to the house, it was not easy. The crowd was massive. Nobody knew they were trapped there. We thought they had escaped. It was until the fire fighters passed through another building that they saw the three lifeless bodies," another neighbour said.

The late Alhaji's younger brother, Mr Oriade Ajibade, said the deceased never stored petrol at home.

"If there is no fuel scarcity, probably this wouldn't have happened. It was the scarcity that caused the incident," he said.

It was also learnt that the deceased was to be appointed unit chairman of Onipanu Phase 2 branch of National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) yesterday.

NURTW Chairman Bajulaiye Abiodun Unit Alhaji Sulaiman Allison said: "We were together yesterday (Tuesday) at the motor park joking about his inauguration; he promised to take care of every one of us who honoured him. I was surprised when I received a phone call about his death. That is why I came to sympathise with his family. His death is a big loss to the NURTW family in Somolu. We will miss him."

A neighbour of the Shabis, Vincent Achum, said the about N400,000 the deceased collected from his cooperative also got burnt.

He said: "He doesn't return home early because he plies Fola Agoro to Onipanu till late hours. But yesterday (Tuesday), he came early. He only asked for a cup of tea and everything just got spoilt. We met at the filling station on Tuesday evening and he talked about celebrating his appointment."

The late sisters' friend, Dupe Fadahunsi, said she saw them in church last Sunday, adding: "We attend Light of Faith Mission. Wuraola was full of life that day. In fact she collected offering in church. She danced all through praise and worship. It is a pity. She just completed her secondary school education. Shakirat is in Senior Secondary School II at Somolu Grammar School. I have learnt a lot from this."

Sympathisers thronged the house yesterday, wailing.

Traders on the street locked their shops; NURTW workers withdrew their vehicles from major roads in honour of the late Shabi.

The Lagos State Environmental Health Monitoring Unit (SEHMU) was said to have evacuated the bodies to Mainland General Hospital mortuary.

Also, a member of the Synagogue Church of All Nations (SCOAN), Felix Ifeanyi, was on Tuesday night burnt to death following a fire at High Climax Hotel at Ikotun in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State.

It was gathered that the fire started from a lit candle around 11pm while he was asleep. The candle fell on the furniture and caught fire.

Sources said the late Ifeanyi had been bedridden for months. He was brought to Synagogue when he could not get relief at various hospitals.

It was learnt that other lodgers in the hotel were not aware of the fire until his five year-old son ran out to call for help.

Efforts to put out the fire failed because of lack of water.

A resident, who identified himself as Darlington, blamed the hotel owner for the incident.

"I don't know why someone managing a hotel will not put on the generating set for the lodgers. That was why the man and his son decided to light the candle.

"In fact, we would have put out the fire immediately his son raised the alarm but we could not get any water. We were forced to collect water from the drainage to put out the fire," he added.

Lagos State Fire Service Director Rasaq Fadipe blamed the Somolu fire on fuel storage at home and the Ikotun fire on lit candle.

Police spokesperson, Dolapo Badmus, a Superintendent (SP), said investigations were ongoing, adding: "We will conduct an autopsy on the body".

She said: "At 23:35pm, one Emmanuel Eze, the Manager of High Climax Hotel in Egbe reported that one Ifeanyi Felix, a lodger in the hotel put on candle which resulted in fire outbreak, and the said Ifeanyi was burnt to dead.

"We have visited the hotel and the body has been deposited at Isolo General Hospital for autopsy, investigation is still ongoing," she said.