

# NOUN worker burnt to death

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A National Open University (NOUN) worker, who just returned from the United States, was yesterday burnt to death when fire razed her Ketu, Lagos home.

The fire, it was learnt, was caused by power surge from a flat in the one-story building.

Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA) General manager Adesina Tihamiyu said the prompt deployment of rescue team stopped the inferno from spreading to other buildings.

He said: "The agency received a distress alert via the emergency toll free number 767/112 at about 3:10am, regarding a fire at 7 Jemigbon Street, Apollo Estate, off Elebiju, Ketu.

"This prompted the immediate activation of the agency's Emergency Response Team (ERT) including the LASEMA Response Unit (LRU), Fire Unit and the Lagos State Fire Service to the scene.

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"The prompt deployment prevented the spread of the inferno to other buildings in the estate.

"Preliminary investigation conducted at the scene of the incident revealed that a duplex which was converted to flats (five mini flats, a two bedroom flat and a four bedroom flat) was gutted by fire.

"This was as a result of power surge from one of the mini flats on the first floor of the building, which then escalated to other flats.

"Further investigation revealed that the inferno, which engulfed the entire building had an adult female entrapped and severely burnt.

"The body was recovered by the agency, handed over to the State Environmental Health Monitoring Unit (SEHMU) and has since been deposited at the Lagos Mainland General Hospital Mortuary.

"The woman was identified as a staff of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). We sympathise with the family of the deceased. However, we emphasise on the incorporation of safety into building construction such as provision of more than one emergency exit route and installation of surge protectors and fire alarm systems to avoid unnecessary loss of lives and properties to fire such as this."

A resident, who identified himself simply as Mr Tomiwa told *The Nation* that the deceased came back from the US this year.

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He said her husband stays in the U.S.

He explained that he was asleep when he heard shouts of “help, help”, with someone knocking his gate around 2:45 am.

“I initially thought it was thieves in the area, so I did not stand up, when the knock was persistent, I summoned courage and moved closer to the gate, and then I discovered it was fire outbreak. The flame was much, many residents were out and we all rendered assistance by pouring water before the various rescue officials came around. They all tried and prevented the fire from extending to other buildings in the estate, in fact, one official of the fire brigade and one LASEMA official were injured while trying to put out the fire.

“The fire was caused by power surge. When they brought light in the middle of the night, it seems the current was high and that led to the outbreak. Besides, I think there is fuel and cooking gas in the compound – all these added to the problem.

“Everything in the building burnt, including phones, laptop, clothes, shoes, money, house hold goods and passport with visa, to mention a few.”

He said part of the burnt wall fell on the woman, adding: “We knew she was under the wall because her intestine was seen on the ground. They had to pack it up in a bag and rolled away the wall to get the other parts of her body which were scattered,” he said.