

## NEWS

# Family of five burnt to death in Lagos

**A** DRYCLEANER, her husband and their three children were burnt to death yesterday when fire swept through some shops in Kilo, Surulere, Lagos mainland.

The woman simply identified as Hope, from Delta State, her husband, nine-year-old daughter, Chukwuka and two sons - Nonso, 7, and Ugochukwu, 6, were killed when fire engulfed Block 23, Ogunleye Street, off Adekunle Kuye Street in Kilo.

Hope's husband, a taxi driver simply identified as Ignacious, died last night after hours of lying critically ill at the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH).

All of their belongings, including washing machine, a

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generator and customers' clothes were destroyed.

An adjoining hairdressing saloon and a grocery shop were also razed. Items including fridge, freezer, hair dryer, water dispenser, chairs and crates of eggs were destroyed.

A resident, who identified himself as Salisu, said the fire started around 1 am, following what he called "power surge".

He said: "We were all asleep when they brought light around 1am yesterday morning. We heard people screaming and shouting for help, but the locked estate gates hindered us from getting close to the scene. We

initially thought they were robbers, but when we saw smoke, we forced the gate open and boys in the area poured water to quench the fire.

"We saw the late Hope escape from the fire initially, but when she discovered that her three children were still inside the house, she went back into the fire but a tension cable dropped on her and she was instantly electrocuted. Her husband was burnt severely, his body became yellow and part of his skin dropped into a gutter around the house."

Many residents described the late Hope as nice, loving and jovial.

One of them, who identified herself as Esther, said: "Hope would always greet passersby. She was the bread winner of the family, she was hard working and she loved her children. She just paid their school fees yesterday (Wednesday). She was always working; it is either she was washing or ironing clothes. I don't think she slept for over two hours in a day. She was loved by all.

"Sometimes, her husband is with her and at other times, he is away from home. It is a painful death; she does not deserve this kind of death. She should have lived to reap the fruit of her labour, because she lived a stressful life and laboured a lot over her children," she said.

The family's church member, who identified herself as Oluwaseun, said the late Hope's children were hard-working.

"Her children would always come to church; they were never reluctant when you sent them on errand and they were loving, smart and intelligent. The church would miss them. Some of the church's decoration materials are with her, which she was meant to wash," she said.

Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA) General Manager Adesina Tiamiyu and Fire Service Director Rasaq Fadipe said four shops were hit by the fire, adding that investigation was ongoing to ascertain its cause.

Tiamiyu said LASEMA received a call via the emergency number concerning the fire around 2:38 am.

This prompted the immediate activation of the Lagos State Fire Service and LASEMA's Emergency Response Team (ERT) to the scene.

He said the emergency workers' quick response prevented the fire from escalating and wreaking havoc on the densely populated neighbourhood.

Tiamiyu appealed to residents to avoid sleeping in their shops, adding that they should always take safety precautions.

According to him, the bodies were handed over to the Aguda Police Division.

## One dies in Lagos building collapse

**A** THREE-STOREY building yesterday collapsed in Ilesamaja, Lagos, killing one person.

Seventeen persons were rescued from the building which fell around 2pm at 2/4 Richard Abimbola Street, off Limca Road, Ilesamaja.

Two persons were still said to be trapped in the building as at press time yesterday.

It was learnt that a block hit the deceased on the head, while debris cut off one of his legs.

Among the survivors were an electrician, Chinonso Obi, 37; a labourer, Sunday Gbose, 19; Matthew Jimoh, 12; an electrician, Monday Gadoy; electrician, 25, an electrician, Benjamin Uchenna, 56; John Afolabi, 18, Dayo Fatau, 30, Abdulahi Mohammed, Ope Falola, 21, Komolafe Ayoola, Dayo Odugbe, John Afolabi, Tosin

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Olaniyi and Agba Ogundele, 40.

According to emergency workers, most of the survivors suffered spinal cord, pelvic and limb fracture and were rushed to the Isolo General Hospital.

The victims were mostly artisans from Benin Republic working on the building.

It was gathered that the building fell on a church, the City of His Grace Mission, where two persons were.

According to the Red Cross, the duo sustained minor injuries and were treated on the spot.

Sunday Peter, a Beninnoise, said about 11 of his kinsmen were trapped in the rubble, adding that four had been rescued.

People trooped to the scene, blocking the road.

## OUR ERROR

In our story published yesterday on page 4 with the headline "IG to retired police officers: don't turn your back at us", we inadvertently said DIG Muhammadu Danmadami was posthumously honoured by the police pensioners. We have since discovered that the former DIG is not dead. The error is highly regretted.