Six die in Abuja market fire

· Minister seeks facility upgrade

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By Gbenga Omokhunu, Abuja

Six persons died on Thursday morning in a fire that occurred at Tippee Market in the Gwarinpa area of Abuja.

Many were injured in the blaze.

An eyewitness said the fire started from a spark in one of the shops about noon, lasting two hours before the firemen put it out.

Another source said that firefighters did not arrive at the scene until two hours after the market was engulfed by fire.

Hoodlums took advantage of the situation and vandalised shops, while some victims remained trapped in the inferno.

Five bodies were evacuated to the morgue, while one could not be recovered in the ashes.

Read Also; VIDEO: Fire guts Gwarimpa tipper market

The injured were rushed to hospital.

Adjoining houses were affected by the fire.

Residents of nearby War College Estate kept an eye out all night.

One of them said, "We were woken up last night about 12am. Almost every resident of the estate had to rush to the scene of the fire outbreak. We were all helpless and couldn't do anything.

"For over two hours, firefighters didn't come to the scene. Six people had already been burnt to death before they arrived. Some of the shop owners usually sleep there. So, they were trapped in their shops.





"Many people have lost their sources of livelihood. Even private houses were burnt too. It was a sad situation. The corpses have been evacuated and the fire put out. It was caused by a spark in one of

the shops."

Investigation shows that millions of naira was lost to the inferno.

Minister of State, Federal Capital Territory Dr. Ramatu Aliyu has expressed worry over the frequent fire outbreaks in major markets across the territory.

Aliyu visited the market alongside Managing Director, Federal Housing Authority (FHA), Sen. Gbenga Ashafa, and FCT Director of Fire Service, Malam Sani Sa'idu, among other top.

The minister, who sympathised with relatives of the dead and other victims of the fire, said there was need for an upgrade of the market to avert such incidents.

In a statement by her media assistant, Austine Elemue, she said: "All the major roads leading to the market were blocked by shops or corner shops. This actually is a pathetic case.

"We will sit together and see how we can bring support to those who were affected and much sympathy to the family of the bereaved."

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