

# How gas explosion killed Rotary President in Osun

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Oluwole Ige - Osogbo



DETAILS emerged on Friday on how a gas station in Osogbo, the Osun State capital, had an explosion which claimed two lives, including that of the President of the Rotary Club of Osogbo GRA, Mrs Fola Omobolawa.

Narrating the incident to Saturday Tribune, Mr Soji Babayemi, the manager of Grace Cooking Gas, the facility where the tragedy occurred, said: "On 9th December, 2017, there was a fire outbreak here. A customer was here to buy gas as usual and she parked her car at the designated car park. She had her car glass rolled up with the air conditioner running. You know, the A/C cannot be running without the engine running, too. She made a call and the next thing from the car was an explosion.

"Immediately, the car door was opened and the fire spread to other parts of our

station. The woman was actually engulfed in fire. She suffered severe burn. She had her driver and another person in the car. The fire started from their car and the two of them were affected. None of our staff was affected."

On how they managed to contain the spread of the fire, Babayemi explained that "we have qualified personnel. The operation manager on ground shut down all the valves immediately. So, that stopped the flow of the liquefied gas instantly. Then we called the men of the fire service. Before then, we had already made use of our industrial fire extinguishers and water hydrants to checkmate the fire".

He added: "In fact, we had been able to control the fire before the men of the state fire service came. But they tried their best to bring the situation under control. We have the problems of semantics. In Yorubaland, some people would say 'Ibikan gba'na, meaning the whole place got burnt. This does not mean this whole place has been destroyed by fire, but it is mere exaggeration."

Babayemi described the death of Mrs Omobolawa, who was a nurse and a director of the Osun State Ambulance Service, as unfortunate.

It was learnt that the victims did not die at the scene of the incident, which occurred around 4.30 p.m.

They were said to have been rushed to the Ladoke Akintola University Teaching Hospital, Osogbo, then to the Obafemi Awolowo Teaching Hospital Complex (OAUTHC), Ile-Ife, from where the state government moved them to the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH), where Omobolawa died on Wednesday.

Her driver was also said to have died on Thursday.

Saturday Tribune gathered that Omobolawa, in company with her driver, whose name has yet to be ascertained, and another occupant, had gone to Grace Cooking Gas, situated in the Omobolanle area, along Osogbo-Iwo Road, to refill her gas cylinder.

Speaking on the development, the state Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Mr Adelani Baderinwa, stated that the incident was sad and unfortunate.

“The government feels pain losing people to such an avoidable death. We want our people to be careful in such a situation. We have always said it that telephone calls should not be made around petrol stations and wherever you have highly inflammable materials. The people of Osun State should be careful about their action in petrol and gas stations,” Baderinwa said.