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Midnight fire claims lives, destroys properties in Lagos, Abuja, Niger, Anambra

December 17, 2017

Adelowo Oladipo, Sylvester Okoruwa and Michael Ovat with Agency Report Top News



AT LEAST eight persons lost their lives with properties valued at almost half a billion naira destroyed in separate fire and auto incidents in Abuja, Lagos and Niger states between Friday night and Saturday.

The victims include a woman, Mrs Amina Salisu, said to be nine-month pregnant and her neighbor in a fire incident that ravaged their residence located at Saiko area of Maitumbi community in

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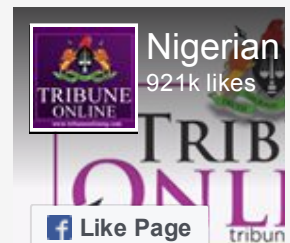
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Scenes of fire incidents that ravaged some shops at the International Trade Fair Centre, on Lagos-Badagry expressway (Photos 1 & 2) and Abuja Arts and Craft Village (Photo 3) in the early hours of Saturday. PHOTOS: SYLVESTER OKORUWA AND SUNDAY OSUNRAYI

Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State.

The cause of the fire, which raged between 12:32 and 1:00 pm was attributed to a faulty high tension cable which allegedly fell on four residential buildings which included house number SKP 160, Saiko, in Sabon Gari community of the council area, as well as five shops shortly after the Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (AEDC) restored electricity to the area.

The Public Relations Officer of the Niger State Emergency Management Agency (NSEMA) Mr. Ibrahim Hussein, who confirmed the incident, said the inferno razed the building, adding that the intervention of the state's fire service, saved the situation by evacuating other residents while the fire was put off before it could spread to other buildings in the neighbourhood.

Other victims, who sustained varying degrees of injuries, included Hadiza Salisu, Tawakalitu Abdulsalam, Taslha Ibrahim, Salisu Wambai, Abdulrafiu Abdulsalam, Fatima Abdulsalam, Abubakar Awawa, Dauda Ibrahim, Alhaji Ibrahim, Muhammadu Ibrahim, Aisha Ibrahim, Muhammed Suraj and Miss Promise Leonard, among others.

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Hussein said some of the victims, with serious burns, including Hadiza Salisu, were rushed to the Federal Medical Centre, Bida, while the other injured victims, who were hospitalised after the incident, had been discharged from different hospitals .

He explained that the fire destroyed properties such as vehicles, household items, pharmaceutical drugs and medical equipment, motorcycles, furniture, electronics, clothing, 30 laptops and foodstuffs.

“In fact, the cause of the fire was AEDC’s high tension cables,” Ibrahim Hussein said.

In a related development, no fewer than six persons were said to have died in an auto crash, which occurred around Sabon Saga, along the Minna-Bida road, on Saturday, while several others sustained injuries.

The Acting Police Public Relations Officer, Niger State Police Command, ASP Peter Sunday, confirmed the incident, during in an interview with Sunday Tribune in Minna.

“Please, as soon as we are able to ascertain the actual casualty figure in the crash,” he said.

Lagos

In Lagos, an early morning fire, on Saturday destroyed goods worth over N50 million.

LASEMA officials at the scene of the incident confirmed to Sunday Tribune that the incident started by 3 a.m, but that they received emergency alert at about 4 a.m.

The fire affected the association of progressive traders article block 1 Lagos Trade complex along

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the Lagos-Badagry expressway.

It was as a result of emission of heat from the dustbin which transferred to a fully loaded truck with goods worth millions of Naira parked by the fence of the dustbin.

The fire spread from the dust bin to the truck and razed the goods that were waiting to be loaded into trucks.



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from
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Anambra

In Anambra, the Onitsha drug market, otherwise known as Bridge Head Market, was in the early hours of Saturday, also gutted by fire.

Goods worth millions of Naira destroyed in the inferno.

The incident, it was gathered, started at about 6 a.m from Redemption Line of the market.

Our correspondent learnt that the quick intervention of men of the Fire Service from Onitsha Main market and Building Materials Market Ogidi, prevented the fire from spreading to other parts of the market.

Abuja

More than 20 shops, filled with artworks, were destroyed in the fire at the Abuja Arts and Craft Village Friday night, Mr Kanayo Chukwumezie, president of the African Arts and Cultural Heritage Association (AACHA) said.

He told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), on Saturday. in Abuja that the disaster led to a loss of over N400 million.



"We have not ascertained the cause of the fire. When the fire started, our members wanted to rush in to stop the fire, but the security at the gate by National Council for Art and Culture (NCAC) prevented them.

"Before the Fire Service arrived, almost all the shops were burnt: they were only able to extinguish the smoke.

"Artworks and other products for Christmas sales worth over N400 million were burnt to ashes," Chukwumezie said.

He said that the NCAC had promised to put in place a fire service unit at the village to ensure prompt response to fire incidence "but nothing was done.

"We use to stay in the village over night, but when they told us to stop staying there and promised to provide security and anti-fire measures, we stopped staying overnight.

"If we were allowed to be staying overnight, this fire accident would have been controlled by those around," he said.

"We appeal to the NCAC to come to the aid of those that lost their means of livelihood in the inferno," he said.

Meanwhile one the victims of the fire, Mallam Mohammed Lawal said he left the village around 8p.m, on Friday.

"I was called later around 10p.m. that the village was on fire. Before I could come back, serious damage had already been done.

"I believe if we were allowed to be staying overnight, such an incident would have been controlled before it caused havoc," Lawal said.

Another shop owner, Mr Kennedy Idowu said he lost everything to the inferno including new art



works and crafts for December sales.

“All, including the one I had before now were burnt to ashes. It’s so unfortunate. I am devastated now, where do I start from?”.

A security guard at the gate, who pleaded anonymity, told NAN that the fire service was contacted immediately the fire started.

“Some people attempted to come in, but we were afraid of hooligans using the situation to loot and steal items from the shops.

“However, some of us attempted to control the fire, but it got out of our control because the shops’ roof was made of dried grass,” he said.

Efforts to get the reactions of officials of the NCAC were not successful.

When Nigerian Tribune visited the market ,traders were seen in clusters clearing their shops of rubble and counting their losses.

A victim, Chidubem Uzochukwu, claimed he lost N700,000 cash and goods worth over N15 million.

The President of Association of Medical and Pharmaceutical Products Dealers Onitsha Market, Mr. Uche Eze, said he was called by market security men at about 6.15 am on Saturday that there was fire outbreak at Redemption Line and he quickly called men of the Fire Service from Onitsha Main Market and Building Material Market Ogidi.

One of the traders whose shop was affected, Darlington told Sunday Tribune that he lost goods worth N5 million while his N500,000 cash was stolen.

Another trader, Kenneth Okereome was said to have been lucky as his shop was among the three that were not affected. He sells hair products.

