

UPDATE: One Dead, Three Injured As Fire Razes Akesan Market In Oyo

• Makinde, Folarin, Dare, Oyo APC mourn

By **Wale Akinselure** On **Jan 5, 2020**

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Fourteen-year-old Wareed Akano was shot dead, while three others sustained injuries from gunshot wounds in a melee that followed Sunday morning's inferno that razed Akesan market in Oyo town, Oyo State.

The four victims were hit by bullets when security agents attempted to calm the agitated crowd who were bent on attacking the state fire service office in Oyo town, about 20 metres away from the market, for failing to arrive on time to prevent the degeneration of the fire.

Those who sustained injuries were Jimoh Idris, Sulu Qudinai and Wasiu Taiwo.

According to the Oyo State police command, through its Public Relations Officer, Fadeyi Olugbenga, the victims were hit by gunshots from a sister security agency who arrived the scene of the incident to assist in the provision of security and prevent the looting of shops and properties at the scene.

Rather, Fadeyi said the police only prevented hoodlums and mob from attacking the Oyo State Government Fire Station in the town as well as the Durbar Police Station, Oyo from being set ablaze.

Hundreds of shops and items worth millions of naira were lost in the inferno which razed the major market with only a few shops and a filling station close by spared in the raging fire that lasted for several hours.

Onlookers had been left confounded and angered following the failure of state fire service located about 20 metres failed to arrive to quell the damage.

With the fire service in Oyo town lamenting nonfunctional facilities and unavailability of water in their trucks to arrest the situation, firefighters from Ogbomoso town and the state capital, Ibadan, had to be mobilized to salvage the much-degenerated scenario.

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Commiserating with the victims, Governor Seyi Makinde, on his official facebook page, assured that the state government will investigate the causes of the incident.

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“I received with shock, the news of the fire outbreak at Oja Akesan in Oyo Town, in the early hours of this morning. Words cannot convey my deep sadness at this incident and I sympathise with the victims. I appeal for calm as we investigate the circumstances around the unfortunate incident,” Makinde said.

Youths and Sports Development, Mr Sunday Dare, stated his intent to work with the Oyo State government to bring relief to the victims.

“The news of the inferno that destroyed the popular Akesan Ancient market in Oyo just got to me. I am deeply saddened by this disaster so early in the year and extend my condolences to all those affected. I will visit shortly and work with the State government to bring relief.” Dare tweeted.

Joining the train of reactions, Senator representing Oyo Central, Teslim Folarin, promised to get the Federal Government to make available adequate relief and support items to the affected.

While urging the state government to look at its firefighting capabilities, Folarin said he had informed officials of the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Resources and Disaster Management to kick start putting in place remedial measures.

“I have already notified officials of the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Resources and Disaster Management of this incident. I would ensure that the Federal Government provides adequate relief and support items to those who have lost their livelihoods, properties and wares to the inferno.

“I urge the State Government to urgently review the firefighting provisions across the State, particularly those around major markets. Eyewitnesses from Akesan confirmed that the State Fire Services/Station closet to the market had little or no water to tackle the blaze. We at the Federal level and the State government must put aside partisan politics and fashion out how best to prevent future fire disasters like this.

“On rare occasions where there are fire incidents, we must ensure that there are adequate firefighting equipment and properly trained fire personnel, to tackle the blaze quickly and effectively,” Folarin said.

Main opposition party in the state, the All Progressives Congress (APC), in its own reaction, urged the Governor Seyi Makinde led administration to urgently provide the needed support to the state fire service to be more effective.

In a statement by the state publicity secretary, Dr Abdulazeez Olatunde, the party particularly urged the state government to place announcements across various media platforms on coping with the harmattan season to forestall another fire incident.

As a matter of urgency, the Oyo APC urged the state government to empower the state emergency management agency and other relevant agencies to provide relief materials to the victims.

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