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PHCN cable kills five traders in Ibadan

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At least five traders were killed in Ibadan, Oyo State on Monday when a distribution cable belonging to the Power Holding Company of Nigeria fell on them at the Apata Market.

Although there were speculations that seven people died in the incident, the Oyo State Police Command said five people were killed.

Our correspondent gathered that the electricity cable fell on the victims around 7am.

Some of those affected were selling vegetable

at the popular Agbekeja section of the market.

Among the victims was a pregnant woman identified simply as Tawa, who was said to be the only child of her mother.

Tawa's mother reportedly slumped and died when the news of her daughter's death was broken to her.

A nursing mother was also said to have been killed in the incident but her one-year-old son was rescued.

According to a tailor in the neighbourhood, Sikiru Ajiboye, residents of the area had earlier lodged a complaint about the state of the cable to the PHCN management.

He said, "The incident could have been averted if the PHCN management had reacted positively to earlier complaints."

Ajiboye, who recalled that the cable had problems on several occasions, said two people had been killed before.

He stated, "We don't know what to do. We had been complaining about the bad state of the cable. Apart from not being the standard size, the cable is also too old and weak."

He added that rather than change the cable, PHCN officials always came to repair it instead of replacing it.

A trader in the market, who identified herself as Mama Taiba, said, "They (the PHCN officials) always extort money from us whenever we demand for their service."

Eyewitnesses said the death toll in the market would have been higher if the cable had fallen during a busy period.

A survivor, Afsat Abiade, who is receiving treatment at the Garden of Eden Hospital, Apata, said she was the first victim to be brought to the hospital. She said other victims that were later brought died shortly after.

The Divisional Police Officer, Apata, Mr. Agboola Abiodun; a youth leader in the community, Mr. Wahab Bamidele and other youths in the area took part in the rescue efforts.

The Chairman, Ibadan South-West Local Government Community Development Council, Alhaji Lasisi Popoola, lamented that it was the third time this year that the PHCN cable cut off and killed some people.

The market was shut to enable the PHCN management to repair the cable.

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The Police Public Relations Officer, Mrs. Olabisi Ilobanafor, said only five people were killed, while some survivors were taken to the hospital for treatment.

She said the command stationed policemen at the entrance of the PHCN office, Apata, to forestall a breakdown of law and order.

She said, "We did that to prevent people from taking the law into their hands."

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