

Boy, 3, dies while hugging electrocuted mum



Akinrinsoye



Hisaun



Ayomide

Kunle Falayi

On Wednesday, October 16, a day after Muslim folks celebrated Sallah, tragedy struck at Oniwaya Junction, Agege, Lagos, as a high tension cable electrocuted four people in the area.

A woman, identified as Mrs. Oluwajedalo but popularly called Iya Fathia, survived the electrocution but lost her three-year-old son, Ayomide, who ran towards her and embraced her as electric shock overtook her.

The incident was still a hot topic of discussion when *Saturday PUNCH* visited the area on Tuesday as some people were seen discussing it in the front of house Number 88, Oniwaya Road, where the incident occurred.

There is a transformer located at Oniwaya Junction. House no 88 is just two houses away from the transformer.

A resident of the house, Mr. James Eboh, promptly pointed to a paper on a wall, a poster of the four victims of the electrocution - Ayomide Oluwajedalo (3), Sunday Hisaun (25), Samson Akinrinsoye (25) and Matthew (37).

Eboh shook his head and said the three-year-old victim should not have died.

He said, "The incident occurred around 8pm. There was a spark on the transformer over there. As we heard the spark, everybody scampered for safety because it had happened before."

"A cable detached from the transformer as the spark went off. It fell on this shop here (in the front of No 88). Iya Fathia moved towards the shop to warn the shop owner, who was inside at the time. But she stepped on a metal on which the shop was built."

"As the electric shock went through her body, she was shaking violently. Ayomide who sighted her mother at the entrance of the house, ran towards her and embraced her. He died on the spot. But his mother survived."

"I am the closest friend of Iya Fathia (Ayomide's mother) in this house. I was one of those who took her to a hospital in Egbeda. It is just sad because the woman is not sane at the moment."

Asked how Mrs. Oluwajedalo could be located, Eboh said her family had requested for her discharge at the hospital in Egbeda where she was undergoing treatment and taken her to Ijebu-Ode.

"The woman was still in shock and she did not seem to be improving. The family had spent a lot on her treatment. They decided to move her to Ijebu-Ode because the cost was becoming unbearable for them. The last time I spoke with her in Egbeda, she was not sounding normal. She was only saying, 'My son is not dead! My son is okay! My son is not dead,' Eboh said."

He explained that the young victim had been buried at the Jafajo Cemetery.

Abiola Oladimeji, who was in his shop when the high tension cable fell on it, said he survived by divine grace.

“As the electric shock went through her body...Ayomide who sighted her mother at the entrance of the house, ran towards her and embraced her. He died on the spot”

"I was told Iya Fathia was coming to alert us when she was electrocuted. It is just unfortunate," he said.

It was a wonder that Oladimeji was not electrocuted because his shop on which the cable fell is a moveable metal container.

"I was lucky because there were wooden panels inside the shop. If not because of that, I would not be standing here talking to you today," the young man said.

Residents of Oniwaya could not provide any information on where Matthew and Hisaun lived before their death. But they gave direction to a house where Akinrinsoye lived which is not far from where he died.

A resident of the house told *Saturday PUNCH* that his relations had taken his body from the mortuary to his hometown.

"He was not married; he was living alone here. The day he died, he said he was going to the junction to eat in a canteen there," the resident said.

Information gathered in the area where the incident occurred indicated that such electrocution had taken place in the same spot on several occasions in the last three years.

A petty trader, whose shop faces the 'transformer of death' directly, said about the middle of last year, there was a spark on the transformer.

The man who preferred to be called just Alhaji, said, "It was just like this one too. A cable fell down as the spark occurred. It fell on a policeman. The power of the electric current flung the man into the gutter there and he died instantly."

"There was also a time a motorcycle was parked close to the transformer. A cable sparked and fell on it. It burnt the machine completely. Luckily, nobody was on the motorcycle that day."

Oladimeji, who had earlier spoken with our correspondent, corroborated this as well. He said he could recall at least three previous incidents in the same place.

He stated, "Just this time last year, a policeman who was holding a gun, was electrocuted right here. There was a time a motorcycle parked close to the transformer was burnt."

"Apart from that, there was also another incident

involving a motorcycle. I cannot really recall if it was early last year or the year before. A rider and a passenger were passing by when a cable sparked and fell on them. They were both electrocuted."

"Why is it that officials of the Power Holding Company of Nigeria cannot do something about this issue? Are they only concerned about collecting money? They are aware because they always come here after each incident to remove the cables."

When *Saturday PUNCH* got to the scene on Tuesday, the cable that caused the electrocution had been removed.

It is common to see high tension cables hanging precariously over residential areas in Lagos.

But residents of Oniwaya said the fact that there had been incidents of electrocution in the same place in the past should have been a reason for PHCN to put in place measures that could protect residents if a spark occurs.

The residents were angry and on the night the incident occurred, a number of youths stormed the palace of the Olu of Agege, Oba Oyedele Isiba.

Saturday PUNCH visited the Olu's palace to seek an audience with the king on Tuesday but an official, who had taken our correspondent's identity card inside, came back later and said, "Kabiyesi is not available for comments."

PHCN Public Affairs Manager for the Ikeja Zone, Mr. Pekun Adeyanju, told *Saturday PUNCH* over the phone that he just resumed from leave.

When asked if he got any report in the past about electrocution in the area, he said, "It may be speculation that there had been electrocution in the area before but I will find out about it."

But Senior Marketing Manager, Akowonjo Business Unit of PHCN, Mr. Henry Adedokun, later told our correspondent that the officials went to the scene of the electrocution the day it happened but protesting youths did not allow them to have access to the area.

He said, "Even community leaders who have my number were already calling to caution us to stay away because of the area boys in the area. But on Friday, two days after the incident, the community leaders came to our office and we promised to remove and replace 3,000 metres of cable with new aluminium conductors."

"We later went to the area that Friday and met with the residents in company with our general manager. When we were informed that one of the victims survived but was in critical condition, the GM indicated that PHCN will do something for the woman, but in the interim, we had to quickly send some money to her from personal pockets."

"It is unfortunate this happened. We have started the removal of the old cables since Monday and should complete the process by Friday (yesterday)."

However, *Saturday PUNCH* visited the area on Wednesday and noticed that some of the cables had been removed.

Residents also said they had seen officials of the PHCN at work in the area.