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Baby dies in inferno, another petrol tanker crashes

JANUARY 13, 2014 BY ENIOLA AKINKUOTU 23 COMMENTS

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Scene of the incident

| credits: Eniola Akinkuotu

The season of fire in Lagos State continued on Sunday morning by claiming the life of an eight-month-old baby, identified simply as Ibukunoluwa, in the Oworonshoki area of the state.

The incident happened less than a week after 15 people lost their lives in an inferno caused by a fallen tanker laden with 33,000 litres of petrol in the Kirikiri area of the state.

Our correspondent, who visited the scene of the Sunday fire at Oke Erin Street, Oworonshoki, learnt that over 30 people were rendered homeless in the fire that

lasted for over an hour.

According to residents, the fire started around 10am after the elder sister of the deceased baby, who was cooking noodles, forgot to put the fire out.

It was learnt that the mother of the baby, who is an employee of the Lagos State Waste Management Agency, was not home when the incident occurred.

A victim, who identified herself only as Iya David, said the fire was able to spread to other rooms because many of the occupants of the compound had gone to church.

She said, "I was in church when I started receiving telephone calls that my house had been gutted by fire. I quickly rushed down to the scene and saw that about six rooms were on fire. We quickly rallied around and attempted to put out the fire but it continued to spread.

"We moved closer and that was when we heard the little baby crying. We saw the baby burning, but there was nothing we could do as the fire was too intense and the roof came crashing down."

Our correspondent learnt that because the houses were all made of wood and sawdust, the fire continued to spread and the residents called on the fire service for help.

It was learnt that the state fire service deployed a truck of water in the scene from Ilupeju Fire Station.

It was learnt that by the time the fire was put out completely, six shanties had been completely razed while three others were damaged.

The landlord of the compound, Samuel Olaoye, said seven families were affected by the fire.

Olaoye explained that the fire started from the veranda where the baby's sister, said to be about 12-years-old, was cooking.

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He said, "I was at church when I was called by residents. I learnt that the older sister of the baby was cooking noodles at the veranda when the fire started. She got scared and ran for her life and by the time she could get help, it was too late.

"The baby has been buried, while I have not seen the mother and the sister for hours."

As of 4pm, when our correspondent left the scene, smoke was still billowing from the charred items.

Many of the victims were seen searching through the debris to salvage some of their belongings.

one of the victims said, "It is not our wish to live in shanties, but it is because we are poor. We have nowhere to lay our heads and we have nothing of our own. We are all going to sleep in a church down the road today. By tomorrow, we will figure something out.

"We however call on the state government to please save our soul."

The General Secretary, Council of Oworonsoki Youth Forum, Kabiawu Babajide, called on the state government and corporate bodies to establish a fire station within the area because of high incidences of fire in the area and its large population.

He said, "Millions of people live in Oworonsoki and many fire incidents occur every day. Despite this, we have no fire station. Whenever there is a fire, we have to wait for a fire station from Ilupeju to respond. This is not adequate.

"We have written to the Ministry of Home Affairs, but nothing has been done yet. Apart from the government, we have written many banks and other private companies to help us achieve this.

"Having a fire station here would not only benefit residents of Oworonsoki but also motorists around Third Mainland Bridge."

Meanwhile, another petrol tanker laden with 33,000 litres, crashed around Ajasa Bus Stop in the Meiran area of the state on Saturday.

The tanker driver was said to have lost control and rammed into a fully-loaded passenger bus

There was however no fire outbreak as firemen were able to cordon off the area and handle the situation.

The Director of the state fire service, Razaq Fadipe, who confirmed the two incidents, urged members of the public to be careful in their daily activities.

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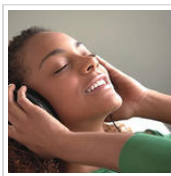
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