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## Two sisters die in Lagos fire, three others burnt

JANUARY 15, 2014 BY ENIOLA AKINKUOTU 2 COMMENTS

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Tragedy stuck on Ajani Kuti Street, Oworonshoki, Lagos State, after fire engulfed a trader's shop, killing two sisters – three-year-old Nura Onashokun; and 10-year-old Olabisi Onashokun.

PUNCH Metro learnt that their 40-year-old mother, Hajara, sustained severe injuries in the fire which lasted for over 20 minutes.

It was learnt that two rescuers, Wasiu Alausa and Sola Akinola; also sustained severe burns in the fire

Our correspondent, who visited the victims' family house, learnt that Hajara was recuperating at the Intensive Care Unit of the Gbagada General Hospital, unaware of the death of her two children.

Eyewitnesses said the fire started when Hajara was cooking in the shop.

The father of the victims, Sule, told PUNCH Metro that the incident still seemed like a nightmare.

He said, "I still do not know how it happened. After our morning prayers, my three daughters usually follow their mother to her shop just in front of the main compound. However, one of my daughters was not in the shop when the fire broke out. Around 8.30am, I heard the shop was on fire and I raced down to the shop but the youths pulled me back because of my old age.

"The shop has two doors. One is permanently locked while the other one was on fire. My wife was able to run out through the fire, but my daughters remained inside.

"By the time the fire was put off and my two daughters were brought out, they had sustained severe burns. The little one died the following day, while the older one died two days later."

Sule said the chairman, Kosofe Local Government, Afolabi Sofola, donated N100, 000 as part payment for treatment before the girls died.

He said his wife was a foodstuff seller while he was an artisan and thus had little money

He said, "I have been spending an average of N20, 000 every day for my wife's treatment. I do not want her to die too. I want the state government to give her free treatment."

Meanwhile, PUNCH Metro learnt that it was in the process of trying to put out the fire that the two rescuers, Alausa 29, and Akinola 24, were burnt severely.

Alausa, said while they were attempting to douse the flames, someone mistakenly threw a keg of petrol at the fire thinking it was water.

He said, "When I noticed it was baba (Sule's) wife's shop that was on fire, I quickly raced to the scene

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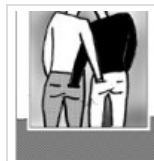


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because the family is very nice. After we had rescued the children and their mother, we were attempting to put out the flames completely when someone threw a keg of petrol at the fire.

"The person thought it was water, but before we knew what was happening; my whole body was on fire. My hands, legs, back and buttocks were burnt. An ambulance was called and I was taken to Gbagada General Hospital, but I was told that there was no bed space and was referred to Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, Ikeja.

"On getting to LASUTH, I was told there was no bed space and the nurses who brought me to the place urged the doctor to let me lie on a stretcher at the hospital, but the doctor refused. I was taken back home where an auxiliary nurse gave me treatment."

The Public Relations Officer, LASUTH, Dele Johnson, however said he was not aware of any rejection by the hospital and urged the victims to return to the hospital for proper treatment.

The Director, Lagos State Fire Service, Razaq Fadipe, told our correspondent on the telephone that he was not aware of the incident.

He said there was need for members of the public to always inform firemen about fire incidents in their area instead of attempting to put it out by themselves.

He said, "We are public servants and it is our job to put out fires. Our telephone numbers are available to members of the public and we will respond to any distress call regardless of the magnitude of the fire.

"Probably, the damage caused by the fire would not have been this bad if the residents had called us because we are trained to combat fire."

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 due to the incidents of fire in the area and its large population.

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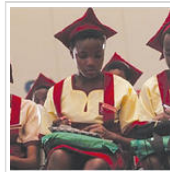
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