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Pregnant woman, daughter, three others die of electrocution

APRIL 11, 2014 BY ENIOLA AKINKUOTU 41 COMMENTS

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The burnt vehicle. | credits: Eniola Akinkuotu Tragedy struck in the early hours of Thursday after a live wire electrocuted a pregnant woman, identified only as Mrs. Ameh, and her three-year-old daughter in front of their home on Onabanjo Street in the Oworonshoki area of Lagos State.

PUNCH Metro learnt that another woman, identified as Iya Fatimah, her daughter and one boy, identified only as Basheet, were also electrocuted, bringing the total mortality figure to five.

Two vehicles were burnt beyond recognition in the incident that claimed the five lives.

Our correspondent, who visited the area, learnt that the incident occurred around 2am when it was raining.

An eyewitness, who wished to remain anonymous, said about three other persons were also injured.

He said, "Around 2am, I was by the balcony of my house when I saw a wire spark. The wire then fell on some wood and caught fire. The fire spread to the tyre of a Toyota car.

"The Toyota car had some jerry cans of petrol inside it and when the fire got to it, the vehicle exploded in front of house number six.

"Some of the occupants of the house, who were trying to run for their lives, passed the back of the house and came out through the front of house number eight."

PUNCH Metro learnt that as the victims were running away, they mistakenly stepped on parts of the wire and were electrocuted.

The eyewitness said, "The pregnant woman (Mrs Ameh) and her daughter were electrocuted by the wire. However, I quickly pulled away Jonathan, their son, and he survived.

"Three other residents, Basheet, Iya Fatimah and her daughter were also electrocuted."

It was learnt that about an hour later, electricity officials disconnected power from the affected lines.

Residents told PUNCH Metro that by the time rescue officials arrived, rescue efforts had been concluded.

A landlord on the street, Audu Owosho, attributed the extent of the damage to the petrol in the car. He said the street had become notorious for illegal sale of petrol.

He said, "Unscrupulous elements have turned this area to a depot of sorts. We have been warning them to desist from selling petrol here, but they have refused.

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"We reported them to policemen at Oworonshoki Police Station, but they refused to do anything about it. If those selling fuel had been arrested, this calamity would have been averted."

The councillor in charge of Ward B, which the area falls under, blamed the Power Holding Company of Nigeria for the incident.

The councillor, Olayinka Awotubo, said there was a need for the electricity firm that recently bought over PHCN to carry out mass repairs.

"We learnt that the high tension wires had been showing signs of wear and tear in recent times. Since PHCN was acquired, the new company has not carried out massive repairs on the equipment. I think more should be done as regards maintenance," he said.

Another tragedy was averted when news filtered that the pregnant woman's husband, who was inconsolable, had eaten poison.

Our correspondent observed that the 45-year-old man, Matthew Ameh, was rushed to Afolabi Hospital.

Matthew's friend, Harrison, told our correspondent that Matthew was seen rolling on the floor clutching his stomach.

When our correspondent visited the hospital, Matthew was unconscious. The doctor in charge of the hospital, James Afolabi, told our correspondent that it was too soon to call it a case of poisoning.

Afolabi said, "It could have been shock, it is too soon to call it a case of poisoning. As I was told, the man just lost his pregnant wife and daughter.

"When he wakes up and when we have conducted necessary tests, we will know what happened."

The General Secretary, Council of Oworonsoki Youth Forum, Babajide Kabiawu, told our correspondent that the corpses had been conveyed to Mainland Hospital, Yaba.

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