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Naval officer loses children to fire while beating wife

MAY 3, 2014 BY KUNLE FALAYI 36 COMMENTS

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A naval officer's two children die in a fire he started accidentally while allegedly beating his wife in Lagos on Friday.

The incident involving the naval officer identified by officials of the Gbagada General Hospital simply as Udofia, took place at the Nigerian Navy Town, Ojo, *Saturday PUNCH* learnt.

According to a hospital official, who pleaded anonymity because she was not authorised to speak on the issue, the deceased children, Emmanuela and Michael, were aged 18 months old and five years old.

When the children were brought in here, their father, who also sustained some burn injuries, said they were electrocuted but that turned out to be a lie because when the wife later came, she narrated what actually happened," the official aid.

The distraught mother of the children, who arrived the hospital much later after their bodies were brought to the burns unit of the Gbagada General Hospital, told hospital officials in tears that Udofia was beating her when he angrily kicked a lit stove.

"The woman narrated that as he kicked the stove, it landed on their refrigerator, which immediately exploded. We were told the children were nearby when the refrigerator exploded," the hospital official said.

The children were reportedly engulfed in flames but all efforts to save them proved abortive. Gbagada General Hospital officials said they were brought in dead.

When our correspondents visited the hospital, naval personnel and an ambulance of the Nigerian Navy Reference Hospital, Ojo were seen in the front of the hospital.

Udofia was said to be receiving treatment in a ward in the hospital as well but he was kept away from inquisitive eyes.

The bodies of the children had also been taken to the hospital's mortuary by the time, our correspondent got there.

Hospital officials feared for the sanity of the children's mother, who was said to have been taken away by her church officials.

"The woman was not acting normal anymore. That may be to the psychological trauma of the event," a hospital official said.

Saturday PUNCH contacted the spokesperson of the Western Naval Command, Lagos, Lt. Way Olabisi, for comment, but he said he was in a meeting at the time.

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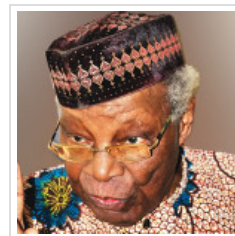


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