

November 13th, 2014



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Lagos family loses all children to candle fire

NOVEMBER 13, 2014 BY SAMSON FOLARIN 3 COMMENTS



The building, Temiloluwa (up), Darasimi

| credits: Samson Folarin

Tragedy struck in the Jakande Estate, Mile 2 area of Lagos State on Tuesday night after a family lost all three children to an inferno which broke out in their apartment.

The victims were identified as Darasimi Ilori (eight months old), Temiloluwa (7), and Daniel (10).

It was learnt that Temilololuwa and Daniel were pupils of Sabis Nursery and Primary School and were in primary three and five respectively.

PUNCH Metro gathered from residents that the fire started after the mother of the children lit a candle, shortly after returning from a church service.

She was said to have locked the children in the room and then went out to pick clothes she had washed and spread out to dry earlier in the day.

Few minutes later, while the kids were asleep, the room was said to have been engulfed in smoke, before fire gutted the flat and burnt the children to death.

Our correspondent visited the area on Wednesday morning and observed that only the top floor of the six-flat building was burnt.

A resident, Ejiro Omamogho, told our correspondent the fire started at 10pm.

She said, "When I was locking up my shop around 10pm, I saw their mother coming back from church. The children were feeling sleepy, so she went upstairs to drop them and shut the room. She lit a candle to illuminate the house before coming downstairs to pack their clothes she spread on the line.

"Within a few minutes, I heard a neighbour shouting, 'Fire! Fire! Fire!' There was pandemonium everywhere. By the time we came out, I asked Iya Daniel (Daniel's mother) where her children were, and she told me they were inside the house."

Another resident, Esther Esiorho, told *PUNCH Metro* that the victim's father, who had just returned from Victoria Island where he worked as a chef in an eatery, began to make rescue efforts.

Esiorho said she also joined in the rescue mission.

She said, "Their father ran back because the fire was too intense.

"What I, however, saw was that the seven-year-old girl, Temiloluwa, had woken up and carried her eight-month-old sister, wanting to run out with her.

"But as she got into the parlour, the ceiling collapsed on them and they fell. Both of them were burnt to death. When we were removing their bodies, we saw the skeleton of Temiloluwa and the baby, clutching to each other."

Our correspondent learnt that immediately the incident happened, the victims' parents were overcome by grief.

While Mrs. Ilori reportedly began speaking incoherently, her husband passed out.

Residents said the couple was admitted at the Amuwo Medical Centre and their conditions were critical.

When *PUNCH Metro* visited the clinic, a nurse said a church bus had been in the clinic earlier to convey them to the Celestial Church of Christ, Covenant Cathedral in the Amuwo Odofin area.

Upon getting to the church, our correspondent met a committee of church elders, who said the couple had been moved to an unknown family house in Ogun State.

A pastor, who declined to give his name, said, "It is an unfortunate incident. When the incident happened last night (Tuesday), all we did was to move the two of them from the estate to the hospital.

"Early this morning (Wednesday), their relatives came to move them to their family house. But we have been instructed not to say a word to the press."

One of the youths who spearheaded the rescue operation, Gabriel Omamogho, decried the attitude of the firefighters, whom he accused of arriving late at the scene and without the right equipment.

Omamogho, who said he removed the charred remains of the kids with his hands and took them to the Yaba mortuary in his car, also accused the community leaders of being self-centered.

"The fire service officials came around past 11pm. When they arrived, they were not with a sledgehammer, ladder or even a fire extinguisher. The youths in the estate climbed up and drew the hose upstairs. We put out the fire at 12am and I took the corpse to the mortuary," he said.

The Director of the Lagos State Fire Service, Rasak Fadipe, however, said his men did not get the alert on time.

"When we got there, we met the fire well alight. The Isolo fire truck was the first to respond with 10,000 litres of water and when I received a signal that the fire was serious, I had to deploy another fire truck from the Sari-Iganmu fire station, with additional 10,000 litres of water.

"However, some of the youths on ground tried to take over the fire equipment from us and out of overzealousness, damaged some of them.

"They delayed in calling us and that was why we were not able to rescue the children. Two flats of three bedrooms each were destroyed by the fire, while we prevented the fire from getting to the ground and first floors."

The spokesperson for the National Emergency Management Agency, South West Zone, Ibrahim Farinloye, advised Lagos residents to be more vigilant with candle light, and not lock up their children in the room while going out.

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- <http://caseagainstgod.com/Bostonceltics>

As sad as this story seems to be, the question is why lit a candle and lock children in a house knowing the danger.

- *Ukwu Nnu*

Please this is not the time for blames, we all know that no where is safe in Nigeria. RIP little angels. My sincere condolence goes to the parents. What a tragedy?

- *Gbenga*

All this using of candles sef!

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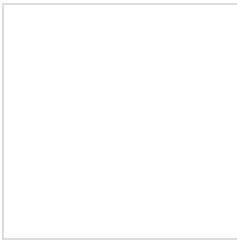
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