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Landlord sets tenant's son, 3, ablaze in Ogun

SEPTEMBER 2, 2015 : OLALEYE ALUKO 22 COMMENTS



The house; the landlord

| credits: Olaleye Aluko

The police in Ogun have arrested a landlord, Joseph Olaleye, for allegedly setting his tenant's three-year-old son, Abdullahi Razak, ablaze which led to the toddler's death in the Owode area of the state.

PUNCH Metro learnt that 65-year-old Olaleye, who had a bungalow at Olowosatide Junction in the area, was reportedly cooking on Monday at about 12pm, when his stove caught fire.

It was gathered that the landlord, in a bid to put out the fire, threw out the stove into the corridor, and the fire caught Abdullahi, who was said to be playing with other kids in the neighbourhood.

Our correspondent gathered that the other tenants in the house heard the screams of the boy, and rushed him to a nearby hospital, where he later died in the afternoon.

The landlord was said to have remained indoors, trying to put out the fire in his room.

The matter was said to have been reported at the Sango Police Division, Ota, and the landlord was arrested.

When *PUNCH Metro* got to the area on Tuesday, it was learnt that Olaleye, who had separated from his wife, was living in the apartment alone.

It was observed that the house had been deserted while the deceased's parents had relocated.

Speaking with *PUNCH Metro*, Abdullahi's mother said the fire burnt the boy's head to his waist, adding that they had buried him on Tuesday morning.

She said, "It was at about 12.30pm, Abdullahi was in the room with me. And later, he said he was going to play with other children. Minutes later, I just heard his screams.

"When I rushed out, I found out that his head, hands and abdomen were already burnt. I and other neighbours tried to rush him to a hospital, but he died. The landlord did not have a wife, and we do not know any of his children. I cannot understand what he did to the fire, that it affected my child."

The boy's father, Olalekan, who worked as a Lotto agent, told our correspondent that although he had forgiven his landlord, it annoyed him that the suspect did not help the boy, but concentrated on his burning room.

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He said, "I was not at home. I was called on the phone, and when I arrived, my son had died. I did not have any quarrel with the landlord."

"My anger is that I learnt that after the fire started, the boy burnt for several minutes before neighbours noticed him, and my landlord, who threw out a burning stove, did not even attempt to help the boy. We have buried the boy on Tuesday morning."

Some landlords, who were contacted by our correspondent, declined to comment on the incident.

The Ogun State Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Muiyiwa Adejobi, confirmed the incident.

He said, "Police detectives arrested the suspect for setting ablaze one Abdullahi Razak."

"The incident occurred when the suspect threw an ignited kerosene stove at the boy, which caused severe injuries on the victim. He was rushed to a hospital in Ota where he was confirmed dead."

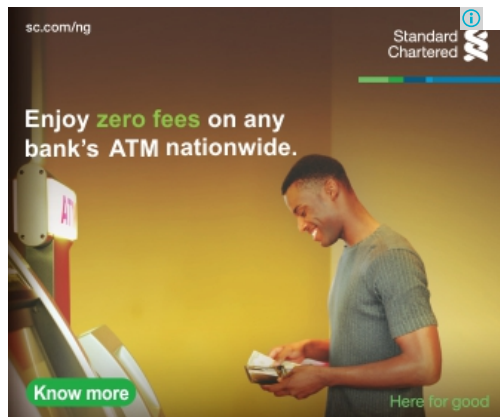
"The Commissioner of Police, Abdulmajid Ali, has directed that the suspect be charged to court after investigation without any delay."

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