

October 9th, 2015



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Wire abandoned by electricity workers electrocutes 15-year-old pupil

OCTOBER 9, 2015 : AFEEZ HANAFI 6 COMMENTS

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Scene of the incident; Afusat

| credits: Afeez Hanafi

A 15-year-old resident of Ishaga Road in the Idi-Araba area of Lagos State, Afusat Musa, has been electrocuted by a live wire that was partially disconnected by officials of Eko Electricity Distribution Company.

About four officials were said to have stormed the neighbourhood penultimate Tuesday, around 2pm, and disconnected wires from houses, whose residents had yet to pay their bills.

PUNCH Metro learnt that the wire cut from a storey building was, however, abandoned on the roof of a mosque near the building, while the other end was still attached to an electric pole.

Our correspondent gathered that moments after power was restored on the fateful day, Afusat, a Junior Secondary School three pupil, who lived in a house next to the mosque, was electrocuted.

She was said to be returning from an errand at about 7pm and touched the metal pole of an aerial mounted beside her house.

She was said to have been rushed to a nearby hospital, where she was confirmed dead on arrival.

A brother of the deceased, Aminu Musa, told *PUNCH Metro* that the manager of the Idi-Araba office of the EKEDC visited the community after the incident was reported at the Itire Police Station and the Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency.

Aminu added that the manager denied knowledge of the workers' operation in the area on the fateful day.

He said, "Immediately Afusat died, we went to the Itire Police Station. LASEPA was also informed about the

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incident. The following day, LASEPA officials, the electricity workers and their manager visited us. The manager denied sending his men to disconnect wires."

Afusat's mother, Zainab, a trader, said the workers eventually admitted complicity in the occurrence when people confronted them, adding that the case was not properly handled because the family was not influential.

She said, "We initially thought it was our wire that caused the electrocution, but it persisted after my daughter died. It was somebody who rushed in to tell us that a live wire was abandoned on the roof of the mosque, which touched our house's roof. The workers initially denied that they did come to our area for the operation. But when people insisted they were the ones, they apologised, saying the wire was mistakenly abandoned. If Afusat was from a rich family would the case die like that? They did not even come in to sympathise with us; they stayed outside."

The deceased's father, Alhaji Muhammed Musa, who described her as obedient, said her death was caused by the nonchallant attitude of the electricity officials.

He said, "Many wires were disconnected that day and we had to settle them to fix them back. I paid them N1,500. A wire was not re-fixed because the residents of the house did not settle them. It was carelessness on their part to have abandoned the wire that was not disconnected from the pole. When there was electricity later that day, people started complaining of shocks but we did not know where it came from until Afusat died."

The Chairman of the community development association, Mr. Rasheed Bakare, said prior to the incident, several invitations had been sent to the electricity company for a discussion on the poor state of electric poles in the area, but were ignored.

He said, "Before this incident, we have written letters to EKEDC, inviting them for deliberation on lingering issues relating to electricity in this community, but they did not honour our invitations. There are cases of falling wires and illegal pole climbing, among others, which we wanted to discuss with them."

The Lagos State police spokesperson, DSP Joe Ofor, said efforts were on to get the statements of the workers complicit in the pupil's death.

He said, "The DPO informed Lagos State of the incident and invited the concerned workers to the station, but they have yet to honour the invitation. Whenever our men go to their office, they are always told that the workers have gone out. We are still making efforts to ensure that they come to the station."

Calls made to the line of the spokesperson for EKEDC, Mr. Godwin Idemudia, rang out. He had also yet to reply to a text message sent to his number as of press time.

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