

How eight-month-old, octogenarian, nonagenarian died in Lagos fire

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• Scene of the Surulere fire Photo: Samson Folarin

Samson Folarin and Olaleye Aluko

No fewer than three people have lost their lives in separate fire incidents in the FESTAC Town, Badagry and Surulere areas of Lagos State.

While an eight-month-old baby was killed in FESTAC Town, a 90-year-old woman was burnt to death in Badagry, while an 83-year-old man died in the Surulere incident.

Our correspondents gathered that the fire that killed the baby, identified as Jessica Ifeanyichukwu, started at about 9pm on Sunday.

Her mother, Ndubuisi Ifeanyichukwu, was trying to put on the family generator downstairs when the incident happened at the family's three-bedroomed apartment on Hakeem Agboola Crescent.

It was gathered that although the fire was not caused by the generator, it happened while Ndubuisi struggled to put on the generator.

The fire reportedly started from the Ifeanyichukwus' apartment.

When *PUNCH Metro* visited the area on Tuesday, the landlady, who gave her name only as Bassey, said the cause of the fire still remained a mystery to her.

She said, "The woman came out around 8.30pm from her apartment to start the generator. She and her husband stayed upstairs and she carried the generator downstairs. She tried to start the generator three times, but it did not work.

"She went back to her apartment. Later, she came down to switch on the bigger generator. When she returned to the room, the entire apartment was already in flames.

"The couple has left since the incident happened. Nobody knows the cause of the fire. The police have not found out anything. The fire also affected a section of my apartment. What made the situation worse was that the woman's husband was not at home."

The Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer, SP Dolapo Badmos, confirmed the incident.

She said, "The fire was put out by a team of policemen and the state firefighters. The baby was consumed by the fire, while the injured mother is receiving treatment in a hospital. The cause of the fire and the value of the property destroyed have yet to be known."

In Surulere, an 80-year-old man, identified as Godwin Oyia, lost his life on Aborishade Close, after fire engulfed his residence.

Property estimated at millions of naira was reportedly lost to the inferno which started around 10am on Tuesday.

PUNCH Metro learnt that after residents tried in vain to put out the fire, the Lagos State Fire Service was alerted.

An official of the agency, who did not want to be identified, said the fire was caused by a plugged boiling ring.

He said, "The house is a one storeyed-building. The fire started from one of the rooms on the first floor. We learnt that a tenant, who was using a boiling ring, left it unattended to. After the water he was boiling dried up, there was an explosion.

“The man who died lived with his granddaughter. When the fire started, neighbours rescued the girl, but when they returned for the man, the fire had aggravated. We saw the man’s charred remains in the last room after the fire was put out.”

The General Manager of the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency, Michael Akindele, said the agency removed the corpse and handed it over to the police.

“The whole of the top floor of the building was razed. However, the ground floor was salvaged with the support of other sister agencies who joined us during the operation.”

The Director of the Lagos State Fire Service, Rasak Fadipe, said the agency deployed firefighters from the Ilupeju, Alausa and Isolo stations to the scene.

He said, “We were able to stop the fire from spreading beyond the first floor. It was at the end of the operation that we discovered the deceased.”

In the Badagry inferno, *PUNCH Metro* learnt that the victim, 90-year-old Mrs. Kayode, had lighted a local lamp around 8pm and gone to bed.

The lamp reportedly fell on her on the bed, setting the house on fire.

Our correspondent gathered that the victim, who initially suffered burns, was rushed to a hospital in the area, where she eventually died.

A source said, “The incident happened around 8pm on Monday on Market Road, Badagry. The woman lighted a local lamp, which fell on her bed. She suffered serious burns and was rushed to a hospital, where she died.”

The director of the state fire service, Fadipe, said firefighters rescued the victim alive.

“She died at the hospital because of the smoke,” he added.

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