

Candle fire kills two kids in Lagos, destroys apartment

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Bola Oyewo Street

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Gloom enveloped Bola Oyewo Street, Ifako-Ijaiye, Lagos State, on Sunday after two siblings were killed in a fire incident.

The kids were identified simply as four-year-old Olawale Akingbesote and his brother, Adesire, aged 2.

PUNCH Metro learnt that the deceased, their elder brother and their mother were together around 9pm on Saturday.

It was gathered that the mother went out to buy some items in the neighbourhood after the children had gone to sleep.

She was said to have lit a candle to illuminate the apartment before leaving as there was power outage.

Our correspondent was told that while the mother was away, the candle burnt down and consumed a table it was placed on. It later spread to the clothes beside the table.

It was learnt that firefighters from the Lagos State Fire Service, officials of the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency and policemen from the Iju Police Division responded to distress calls from residents, but the two kids had died before help could come their way.

The unnamed elder brother was, however, rescued with the support of the residents, while the fire was eventually put out.

A resident, Moshood Ibrahim, said the fire had spread to other parts of the room before a neighbour became aware and raised the alarm.

He stated that the distraught mother and the survivor had temporarily relocated to a relative's house.

He said, "Their mother went out that evening to quickly get some items on the street, but she returned late. The candle had burnt to some level before she left home. Her thinking was that she would come back early.

"She did not put out the candle fire because she did not want the children to sleep in a dark room. Their father was not around. Two of the children were suffocated by the fumes, but their elder brother was rescued and rushed to a hospital. Everybody was devastated by the incident."

An emergency official, who spoke to our correspondent on condition of anonymity, said the survivor was rescued behind the apartment door.

"He should be about eight years old. He managed to force his way from the fire into the back of the door, where we rescued him," he added.

The Director, Lagos State Fire Service, Mr. Rasaq Fadipe, confirmed the fire and the deaths.

He said, "When we arrived at the scene, fire was still on in the room where the kids lost their lives. The information we gathered was that the mother went out and the father was not around as well. The two kids were inside the room and the candle was alight. It was the candle that caused the inferno.

"We were able to rescue one of the children and saved other rooms from being affected by the fire. It happened around 9.30pm and our fire station at Agege responded to the emergency."

Fadipe stated that the agency also responded to fire incidents at a one-storeyed building on Wole Bamiduro Street in the Ahmadiyya area of the state, as well as a bungalow on Oseni Liadi Street, in the Okota area of the state.

“No casualty was recorded in the two incidents. We urge residents to discontinue the use of candles at homes. It is very delicate and has been consuming lives. There are rechargeable lamps and torches that are cheap and risk-free.

“I want to admonish politicians, who have been carrying out series of empowerment programme, to include torches and rechargeable lamps in the materials they have been providing for the populace. This will go a long way in preventing loss of lives and property.”