

Residents of Mabel Street in the Etete area of Benin City, Edo State, were thrown into mourning on Tuesday when a family of three was burnt to death as fire razed their apartment.

PUNCH Metro learnt that the fire, which started around 2am, resulted from a gas explosion caused by a lighted candlestick.

It was gathered that one Silvanus Uku, his wife and their baby were burnt beyond recognition inside their apartment at No 53 Mabel Erewa Close, off Etete Road, before help got to them.

One of our correspondents learnt that other residents of the building lost their properties to the fire.

The landlord, Egberamwen Enobakhare, who said he noticed that smoke was coming from the deceased's room, added that the fire started from a gas cooker.

“I forced the door opened and saw flames from the gas cooker; there was nothing I could do. I was totally helpless and could not go in. That was how the family died in the inferno,” he said.

One of the tenants, Osayande Joseph, who noted that she was only able to pick her child, said she escaped being burnt by fleeing through the back door of the building.

When contacted, the state Director of Fire Service, Franklin Agbonlahor, said he could not comment on the incident as he was on holiday.

“I'm on holiday now and until I get detailed information about the incident, I cannot give any information to anybody. I will be available in the office tomorrow (Thursday) and I will get a detailed report then,” he stated.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Chidi Nwabuzor, who confirmed the incident to our correspondent, said the Etete Police Station received the situation report and contacted the state fire service.

He added that the inferno had wrecked havoc before the fire service could get to the scene.

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Nwabuzor said, “It is true that on December 25, 2018, the Etete Police Station received a situation report that there was a fire incident at No. 53 Mabel Erewa Close, GRA, Benin City, the property of one Enobakhare.

“The police went there and met the building still burning, but unfortunately, before the Edo State Fire Service could respond, the fire had actually caused havoc and consumed one Mr Silvanus Uku, his wife and their baby, and the properties of other occupants of that house.”

