

12-year-old electrocuted at Kogi football viewing centre

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Gbenga Odogun, Lokoja

Residents of Lokoja, the Kogi State capital, have been thrown into confusion following the electrocution of a 12-year-old food seller, Ramatu Muhammed.

Eyewitnesses told our correspondent that the incident happened on Sunday while Ramatu was trying to pass a sachet of water to a customer through the window at a television viewing centre.

Residents said the incident could have been averted if the owner of the centre, identified simply as Babanladi, heeded a warning about a naked wire hanging on the window.

Residents, who spoke on the incident, alleged that Babanladi deliberately left the naked wire on the window to prevent intruders from watching football matches for free.

As a result of the incident, some residents staged a protest on Monday condemning Ramatu's death, while also lamenting that all their warnings in the past were allegedly ignored by Babanladi.

The wire, according to a patron of the centre, who was present when the incident happened, always comes in contact with customers' bodies whenever they are at the viewing centre.

When the incident occurred, many of the football lovers, who were at the centre watching the African Cup of Nations' match between Egypt and South Africa, reportedly ran out.

Narrating the incident, a friend to the deceased, Habibat Ibrahim, told our correspondent, "Ramatu and I were together where I sell rice when someone asked her to bring a sachet of water to the viewing centre. Having waited a while for her to come back, I had to trace her to the viewing centre, where I saw her hanging on the window.

"I called her, but she did not respond to my call; it was then I suspected that something must have gone wrong with her. I then called for assistance. Some men came around and removed her hands from the naked wire. As the men noticed that she was already dead, they covered her with a piece of clothe."

The mother of the deceased, Awushetu Muhammed, in a chat with our correspondent, called on the relevant authorities to bring Babanladi to justice for connecting a naked wire to the window of the viewing centre, which she argued, was a public place.