

Five awaiting trial inmates electrocuted in Ikoyi prison

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Adelani Adepegba and Samson Folarin

Five awaiting trial inmates of the Ikoyi Medium Security Custodial Centre (Ikoyi Prison), Lagos, have been electrocuted after an electric wire snapped and fell on a cell on Monday.

Our correspondent gathered that several others were injured and rushed to hospital for treatment in the early morning incident.

A source said the casualties would have been more but for the intervention of medical workers in the centre.

PUNCH Metro gathered that more than 100 inmates were in the cell at the time of the incident.

The source stated, “Actually, what happened was that while some inmates were going to the courts this morning (Monday), there was a power surge.

“The surge cut off an electric wire. You know, Nigerian prisons use metal bunk beds. So, the inmates, who were close to the bunk beds, were the major casualties.

“The five deceased inmates were the closest to the bunk beds and that was why they did not survive it.

“If not for the medical workers in the prison, many more inmates would have died. The prison authorities called the power company and power was disconnected. The officers also offered first aid, which reduced the number of casualties.”

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Our correspondent gathered that the matter had been reported to the authorities in Abuja and a delegation had visited the centre for an on-the-spot assessment.

The spokesperson for the Nigerian Correctional Service, Francis Enobore, confirmed the incident.

Enobore, in a statement he issued on behalf of the Controller General of the NCS, Ja’afaru Ahmed, described the incident as “tragic and most ill-fated.”

He said, “Early this morning, the Controller General of Corrections, Ja’afaru Ahmed, received with the deepest grief the unfortunate death of five inmates of the Ikoyi Medium Security Custodial Centre, Lagos, as a result of electrical fault in one of the cells.

“The CG, who visited the scene of the incident with the Minister of Interior, Rauf Aregbesola, noted that it was the first time in the history of the NCS to experience such a disaster.

“He, therefore, ordered an immediate investigation into the sad incident with a view to taking necessary actions to forestall a recurrence. He commiserated with the families of the deceased inmates and prayed for quick recovery for the seven others, who are receiving treatment in hospital.”

Aregbesola has ordered a probe of the incident and directed that steps should be taken to prevent future incidents.

According to Enobore, the controller general assured members of the public that inmates' safety and humane custody would continue to be a priority of the government.

The statement noted that as of the time of the incident, the Ikoyi Medium Security Custodial Centre, which was built in 1955 for 800 inmates, had a population of 3,113, with 2,680 as awaiting trial persons.

It added that the cell, where the disaster occurred, had capacity for 35 inmates, but contained 140 persons.

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Contact: theeditor@punchng.com

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