

Doctor, two daughters die in Lagos home fire

Published December 18, 2020



File photo

Eniola Akinkuotu, Abuja

A medical doctor, Ijeoma Idaresit, who described herself as having a dream of improving Nigeria's poor health sector, has died in a fire along with her two children.

Idaresit, who was until her death, the Conference Director at Postpartum Support Network Africa, was said to have died along with her two daughters at their Parkview, Ikoyi, Lagos, on Sunday after an electrical fault ignited a fire.

A friend of the deceased, Olatoun Gabi-Williams, in a tribute she posted on Facebook, said neighbours contacted the Lagos State Fire Service but before the firemen arrived, the house had been razed.

She wrote, “On Saturday, December 12, 2020, we lost a dearly loved one, Ijeoma Idaresit née Ejekam, our African Book Group librarian and cherished friend to all of us.

“The tragic death of Ijeoma, fondly known as Ije, occurred at her Park View residence when due to an electrical fault, a fire started, quickly consuming the entire building with Ije and her two beautiful daughters – a toddler and a baby – indoors, upstairs. The fire brigade showed up 20 minutes too late: by the time they managed to get upstairs to rescue the young family, it was too late.”

But a spokesman for the Lagos State Fire Service, Ahmodu Shakiru, who spoke on behalf of the acting Head of the agency, Margaret Adeseye, said the fire service could not be blamed for the incident.

Adeseye said most times, people either do not call the fire service on time or don’t give a proper description of the location of the fire.

She said, “That is the usual accusation, but the point is that we are not yet operating digital so, we rely on public information and time of response is a factor of many things from who discovered the emergency and what action was taken and what time the alarm is raised.

“It is unfortunate that since 2007, when the Lagos State Government introduced the toll free number, over 60 per cent of Lagosians don’t even have the number on their phone. So, how do they call and how accurate is the information given, the street name, the name of the areas?

“Parkview, where this incident happened, has its own fire engine and we have helped the estate to set it up, but they cannot run it effectively. They asked us to help them operate it but the condition was that the engine could never be used outside their estate and we rejected this because as firemen, we are expected to help anyone who has an emergency.”

READ ALSO: [Couple, man arrested for stealing N18m Ogun telecom mast diesel](#)

Meanwhile, tributes have continued to pour in for the medical doctor on social media.

The doctor, according to her LinkedIn profile, graduated from Igbinedion Secondary School, Benin, in 2000 and then proceeded to the University of Nigeria in 2001 and obtained a Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery in 2008.

She later attended the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, University of London, where she obtained a Master of Science in Public Health.

Idaresit, in her profile, described her reason for studying medicine.

She wrote, “Becoming a doctor has been a childhood dream come true. The prospect of making a difference in people’s lives has always given me a thrill. Call it a God complex, I call it my vocation.”