

Arsonists set ablaze 75-year-old Kogi monarch's sister, granddaughter

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By Gbenga Odogun

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Suspected arsonists have invaded the residence of a 75-year-old elder sister of the Attah Igala, Mathew Opaluwa, and set her ablaze, killing her in the process.

The woman identified as Meimunat Opaluwa Sani was set ablaze alongside her granddaughter, Hajarat, in the early hours of Thursday, at her Oketekwe residence in Idah Local Government Area of Kogi State.

A family source said, “A group of people came to the house with petrol while our grandmother was sleeping alongside her daughter and granddaughter. They poured the petrol on the house and set it on fire.

“The five-year-old granddaughter, Mama, died immediately after suffering severe burns, while Mallama Meimunat Opaluwa Sani, along with her own daughter, was rushed to an undisclosed hospital. Mallama later succumbed to her injuries in the hospital, while her daughter was still battling for her life.”

Meanwhile, the Minister of Steel Development, Shuaib Audu, in a condolence message issued on his behalf by his Special Assistant on Media and Publicity, Lizzy Okonji, said “The Minister of Steel Development, Shuaibu Audu, has extended his heartfelt condolences to the paramount ruler of Igala kingdom, Mathew Opaluwa, over the death of his sister, Mallama Meimunat Opaluwa-Sani and her granddaughter.”

He described the deaths of the late Opaluwa-Sani and her five-year-old granddaughter as tragic and sacrilegious.

The minister called on security agencies to investigate the alleged arson and bring to book the perpetrators of the crime.

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“It is with a heavy heart that I condole with our father, HRM, Mathew Opaluwa, and the royal family over the deaths of his sister and her granddaughter, whose lives were taken in the most painful manner.

“I also commiserate with the entire people of Igala Kingdom at this time because this is a loss to every one of us.

“I call on security agencies to investigate the alleged arson and bring the perpetrators of this act to book so that it would serve as a deterrent to others. Such acts of sacrilege must be discouraged in our land.

“I pray that Almighty Allah grant the souls of the late Mallama Meimunat Opaluwa, and her granddaughter, Onechojo Aljanah Firdaus. I also pray Almighty Allah grants the family the heart to bear the loss,” Audu stated.

However, the Kogi State Police Command is yet to react to the incident as the state Police Public Relations Officer, SP William Aya, has not responded to a message sent to him and has not picked up repeated calls to his mobile phone.

Our correspondent also called the state Security Adviser, Jerry Omadara, who promised to get back but has not done so as of the time of filing this report.