

Mother, two children killed as arsonists set family ablaze in Lagos

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Map of Lagos State

By Dayo Oyewo

A 22-year-old fashion designer, Eniola Oduse and her two children, four-year-old Eri and two-year-old Onoara, have been burnt to death after suspected arsonists set their home ablaze at the Ita Marun community in the Ibeju Lekki area of Lagos State.

The deceased's husband, Kehinde, 25, who was also caught up in the fire, is currently battling for his life in an undisclosed hospital.

PUNCH Metro learnt on Sunday that the incident occurred in the early hours of Tuesday, November 26.

It was gathered that the family of four was asleep in their room on Monday night when some yet-to-be-identified individuals entered their premises at about 2 a.m.

The individuals were said to have sprinkled petrol around their apartment and specifically poured it into their room before setting it on fire.

The victim's twin sister, Taiwo, who spoke to our correspondent on Sunday, said while her brother ran out of the room to seek help, his wife and two children didn't make it alive.

She said, "The incident happened around 2 am. My brother and his family were already asleep when the people came and poured petrol on the building. Meanwhile, my brother had opened his window to allow ventilation. When they saw the window open, they sprinkled petrol in their room. The smell of the petrol woke the wife, who quickly called her husband's attention to the smell.

"By the time they attempted to find out what was going on, they saw someone light a fire and throw it into their room. Kehinde, with fire on his body, quickly ran out of the house to call his relative living close to the house. Although the relative did not respond to his call, it was another neighbour who heard his voice and ran out to help."

According to Taiwo, Kehinde's wife and the two kids were already caught up in the fire when they returned to the apartment.

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She said, "When they got back to the house, they saw the wife lying on the entrance of the house with the legs of her two kids in her arms. She actually tried to drag them out but the fire was too much and the kids were already dead at the time."

Another member of the family of the victim, who identified himself as Razaq, said the couple were rushed to various hospitals at midnight but were rejected due to the degree of the burns.

He said they were moved around for medical attention for about seven hours before they were later referred to a hospital where they were later admitted.

“They were eventually taken into a hospital somewhere in Lagos where they were attended to. But at the time they got medical attention, they were both weak. Doctors tried to save the wife but she later died in the early hours of Thursday. We really can’t ascertain the situation of Kehinde at the moment.”

Our correspondent gathered that the victim’s deceased wife and children had been buried.

In a video sighted by our correspondent, the apartment was razed with the charred remains of the two children lying inside.

Speaking further, Razaq alleged that the cause of the incident was not unconnected to issues relating to land in the community.

He said, “The family has been under pressure and a series of attacks due to attempts to seize their land running into hectares from them. This was a part of what led to the death of their father about four months ago. His brother had also fled the community due to this, but Kehinde chose to stay behind because of his family. He was not at home for about some days. He only came back that Monday to spend the night with his family when this incident happened.”

The spokesperson for the state police command, Benjamin Hundeyin, could not be reached as calls made to his phone were not responded to. A text message sent to him had yet to be replied to as of the time this report was filed.