

Woman, Three Children Burnt to Death in Niger

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Laleye Dipo in Minna

A mother and her three children, including a one-month-old baby, have been burnt to death in a fire that gutted their home in the Nkangbe area, a suburb of Minna, the Niger State capital, last Tuesday night.

The mother and her children were said to be asleep when the fire broke out according to eyewitnesses, who also claimed that the husband of the woman was away in Abuja, and therefore, escaped the disaster.

It was learnt that the second wife and her two children were reported to have been rescued by neighbours, and are now receiving treatment for burns at the Minna General Hospital.

The cause of the fire is not yet known, but people around the area said it couldn't have been from electricity surge since there has been no electricity supply to the area for two months as a result of the faulty transformer supplying the area with electricity. The bereaved family, it was learnt, didn't switch on their power generator that fateful night.

According to the eyewitnesses, the deceased would have been rescued alive but for the security proofs fixed on their windows and doors which made the residence inaccessible.

"Men of the state fire service responded promptly to the distress call, but the burglary proofs on the windows and doors hindered their work," he said.

A neighbour of the deceased, who gave his name as Musa Ibrahim, said "We tried our best to rescue the women and the children but we could not as the fire was very intense.

"We tried as much as we could, but we couldn't get inside the house. With the help of the fire service, we rescued the second wife through the window and she was wounded and has some burns."

An official of the state fire service, who did not want his name in print, said: "We are still trying to ascertain the cause of the fire. We received distress call from those in the area, and we came immediately; we tried to help fight the fire, but we met people trapped inside the house, and we are able to rescue only three people from the house."

Virtually everything in the house was burnt to ashes as a result of the inferno.

The Niger State Fire Service Public Relations Officer, Malam Mohammed Adamu, could not be reached for confirmation of the story but the Police Public Relations Niger State Police Command, ASP Wasiu Abiodun, when contacted, confirmed the incident.

He said: "Yes it happened, and we have the report that four people died in the fire, and investigation is in progress."

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