

CrimeAlert

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Alleged bunkering; Illegal fuel dealer burnt, property worth millions destroyed in Lagos

By ESTHER ONYEBULA

A MIDDLE-aged fuel dealer identified simply as Friday, was recently burnt to death while properties worth millions of naira were destroyed following a fire outbreak that occurred at their Iba residence in Lagos State.

Crime Alert learnt that the incident occurred after one of the tenants in the building on Princess Eneni Majofodun street, said to be cooking at the corridor, attempted to put out the flame in the stove with water.

Eyewitness account

Eyewitnesses said coincidentally, Friday, was at the same time pouring petrol inside a jerrycan resulting in an inferno. It was gathered that other occupants of the building comprising twelve rooms scampered out of their rooms for safety while some of them managed to salvage some of their belongings.

Friday, whose body was reportedly engulfed by fire, displayed rare bravery as he was said to have ran out of the building and tried to put off the fire but did not succeed. He was reportedly rushed to an undisclosed hospital where, unfortunately, he was



• The burnt building

pronounced dead.

The story took another dimension when Crime Alert visited the scene. Neighbours who pleaded for strict anonymity alleged that majority of the occupants of the affected building engage in illegal bunkering by siphoning petroleum products from a nearby NNPC pipeline and storing the cans inside the building. One of the witnesses said, "We foresaw

this coming but no one knew exactly when. Almost all the tenants in the building were engaged in illegal bunkering and they usually store the products in jerrycans which they sell to ready buyers.

On the fateful day, I was alerted by shouts of fire. I had to pack some of my valuables for fear that the fire might spread to our building. We were made to understand that the fire start-

ed after one of the tenants who had finished cooking attempted to switch off the kerosine stove while Friday was turning fuel into a container.

It resulted in an explosion which destroyed everything they have managed to buy with the siphoned product. We were also made to understand that the fuel the deceased was turning into a jerrycan was si-



• CP, Lagos - Umar-Manko

phoned."

Officials of Fire Service attacked

It was gathered that while the fire raged, no one could at first reach the Federal Fire service. However, when the officials from Ojo station arrived the scene, they got more than they bargained for as some of the residents allegedly attacked them for arriving late.

They blamed the officials for the cause of the extensive damage positing that had they arrived early, the situation would have been contained.

Crime Alert also gathered that but for the timely intervention of the policemen who were on ground, the situation would have degenerated.