

Tragedy in Lagos, as father, two daughters die in fuel explosion

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By Monsuru Olowoopejo

It was a harvest of fire disasters in Lagos State, Tuesday night, as four persons were killed in separate fire incidents in Shomolu Oja and Ikotun areas of the state.

At Shomolu Oja area of Shomolu Local Government, Lagos, a man and his two daughters were burnt to death while the man was trying to re-fuel his generating set.

Just as a bed-ridden man seeking spiritual cure at the Synagogue Church of All Nation, SCOAN, was also burnt to death in a hotel in Ikotun area.

The Shomolu deceased identified as Alhaji Kamorudeen Ajibade, 65 years old; his daughters, Miss Wuraola, 19 years old, and Shakirat, 15-year-old, were consumed in an explosion at about 10p.m.

It was gathered that the late children died trying to rescue their father who got trapped after the explosion as he tried to re-fuel his generator as the wife of the deceased, Mrs. Rachael Ajibade, was able to escape the inferno with the last child of the family.



FILE: A man carries jerrycans to search for fuel

in Lagos,

The late Ajibade, sources said, was expected to be sworn in as the unit chairman of Onipanu Phase 2, branch of the National Union of Road Transport Workers, NURTW, yesterday (Wednesday) before his demise.

When Vanguard visited the scene, yesterday, it was observed that the fire did not spread to other apartments in the building, just as traders on the street locked their shops.

The late Ajibade's colleagues at NURTW also withdrew their vehicles from the major roads in the area in his honour.

The Lagos State Environmental Health Monitoring Unit, SEHMU, was said to have evacuated the corpses and deposited their remains at the Mainland General Hospital Mortuary.

I don't believe my father, siblings are dead —daughter

Mrs. Shukurat Shabi, daughter of late Ajibade, said: "I am yet to come to terms with the fact that my father and sisters are dead."
According to her: "My father was a hard-working man. When it was time for him to be rewarded for his efforts towards the progress of transportation business in Shomolu, he died suddenly.

"He just bought a bus three weeks ago to complement the one he had before and it was the same bus he used to siphon the fuel which he was putting into the generating set that exploded.

We never stored fuel at home —Deceased's brother

Ajibade's younger brother, Mr. Oriade Ajibade, debunked claims that he stored fuel at home, "we never stored fuel in our house."

His word: "If there was no fuel scarcity, this could have been averted. It was the fuel scarcity that caused the incident."

Eyewitness accounts

A neighbour, Mr. Vincent Achum, described the incident as mysterious fire,

adding that about N400,000 that the deceased collected from his cooperative also got burnt while the burnt money litter the compound.

His words: “He doesn’t return home early because he plies Fola Agoro to Onipanu. But on Tuesday he returned home early. We met at the filling station on Tuesday evening. He talked about celebrating his appointment.

“Even before the fire fighters gained access to the house, it was not easy. The crowd was massive. Nobody knew they were trapped there. We thought they escaped. It was until the fire fighters passed through another building they saw the three lifeless bodies,” he added.

....I am shocked —NURTW chairman

NURTW Chairman, Bajulaiye Abiodun Unit, Alhaji Sulaiman Allison, said, “We were together Tuesday at the motor park joking about his inauguration, and he promised to take care of every one of us who honoured him.

“I was surprised when I received a phone call about his death. That is why I came to sympathise with his family. His death is a big loss to NURTW family in Somolu. We will miss him.”

.....Fire services blame explosion on fuel storage

Confirming the disaster, Director Lagos State Fire Service Rasaq Fadipe, who confirmed the incident, said the fire was caused as a result of fuel storage in the country.

However, he advised residents to desist from storing petroleum products in their homes so as to prevent loss of lives and property.

Meanwhile, a bedridden man seeking for cure at the Synagogue Church of All Nation, SCOAN, was Tuesday night also burnt to death in a hotel his family secured for him close to the church in Ikotun area of Lagos.

The man identified as Felix Ifeanyi reportedly put on candle light which fell on the furniture while he fell asleep with his grandson, and later caught fire which consumed

him as he was burnt to death.

Sources said that the late Ifeanyi, a worshipper at the Synagogue Church of All Nation, SCOAN, had been bedridden for months after contracting an unknown ailment, and efforts to get cure at different hospitals proved abortive.

It was learned other lodgers at the hotel were not aware of the inferno until his five year-old grandson ran out calling for assistance in putting out the fire. Efforts to put out the fire early, according to the sources, proved abortive because they were unable to source for water.

We will conduct autopsy on the corpse-Police

Also confirming the incident, the Police Public Relation Officer, PPRO, Dolapo Badmus, said that they have commenced investigation into the inferno, saying “we would conduct an autopsy on the corpse.”

According to her, “At 23: 35 pm, one Emmanuel Eze, the Manager of High Climax Hotel in Egbe reported that one Ifeanyi Felix, a lodger in the hotel put on candle light which resulted in fire outbreak, and the said ifeanyi was burnt to dead.