

Beat: Miscellaneous

Fire at Islamic school in Myanmar kills 13 boys

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USPA News - Thirteen children were killed Tuesday when a fast-moving fire engulfed a mosque and its adjoining religious school in Myanmar's largest city, local authorities said. The blaze was blamed on an electrical fault and officials said there is no evidence of foul play.

The incident began at around 3:15 a.m. local time on Tuesday when a fire broke out in Yangon at a two-story building which encompasses a mosque, an Islamic school, and a dormitory. Around 80 teenage boys are believed to have been sleeping on the second floor when the fire broke out. Firefighters rushed to the scene and were able to rescue the vast majority of the children, who had become trapped inside and unable to escape as the building's windows were shut by iron bars. It took firefighters about 30 minutes to get the blaze under control, after which rescue workers entered the building to search for missing students. Yangon Region Fire Service chief Kyi Win said they recovered the bodies of thirteen children, all whom died of suffocation after inhaling too much smoke. The official said the blaze was likely caused by an overheated voltage regulator, and police squashed rumors that the fire had been deliberately set. Police said the regional government will form an investigative commission to determine the exact causes of the fire, which comes amid communal violence in other parts of the country. At least 43 people have died in Buddhist-led violence in recent weeks, mainly targeting minority Muslims.

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