

# Tower blaze drama

## Residents flee flats after hearing their neighbours shout

By Myra Philp

A FAMILY of five spent a terrifying 30 minutes trapped inside their Dubai apartment yesterday as a fire swept through their tower block, shattering windows and sending glass and burning debris to the ground.

The parents and their children, aged 12, 11 and nine, had no way out of their top-floor apartment in the Saif Belhasa tower until firemen arrived with breathing apparatus to guide them out.

The fire started in a fourth-floor apartment at around 8.30am yesterday and rapidly swept upwards, gutting nine floors of the building.

Resident Adil told 7DAYS: "The family that was trapped is OK. The fireman got to them with masks. They couldn't get out of their apartment because of the thick smoke."

He told how he had to wake his three children and get them to safety. He said: "I was just sitting idle, it's Saturday morning. The kids were sleeping. I made them get up and get out."

Once Adil got his family out, he realised his car was in danger of catching fire when a piece of on-fire cladding landed underneath it.

He said: "I got in fast and reversed it away from the building."

He added most people left the building quietly but quickly and only once they were safe did they take in what had happened.



**GUTTED:** The burnt out apartments that spread from the fourth to the ninth floor of the Tecom tower

Adil said: "I saw lots of people crying after they got out. It's the kids I am worried about. Kids can't take things like this."

Another resident said she was lucky she had been out taking her daughter to an event at school.

She said: "I am on the second floor just below where the fire started. The maid was in and she telephoned me, crying, to tell me what was going on. Thank God nobody was injured."

Others who fled from their homes claimed they did not hear any alarms and were only alerted to the blaze when neighbours started shouting "get out, get out".

One British man said: "There was no alarm. I smelled smoke then heard the shouts. There were no alarms and no sprinklers."

Another resident said that when firefighters

arrived there was no water pressure in the fire hydrants and the water from the hoses only reached the floor below the seat of the blaze.

She said: "It was only brought under control when the cherry-picker thing they have arrived."

Another said: "I can't believe the building I live in had such a bad fire. It's just crazy. I'm in shock."

Residents were told there was no conclusive evidence about how the fire started but it was thought it may involve a rubber pipe between a gas canister and a cooker.

The building has no mains supply of gas.

The whole block was smoke damaged and the electricity supply was shut off, which left tenants having to move in with family and friends last night.

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