

Sixty-two dead in Sweden's worst fire in modern times

Richard Tyler
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A fire in Gothenburg, Sweden killed at least 62 people and injured over 190 others. The fire broke out at a Halloween party attended by many young people, some aged just 14. Although the facility was licensed for 150 people, 300 were in attendance.

This was Sweden's worst fire tragedy in modern times. Fire services were alerted at 23.45 on Thursday night and arrived at the scene within minutes to witness the building in full blaze. The scene was one of utter chaos and panic, fire crews reported. It took three hours to get the fire under control.

A fleet of ambulances took approximately 190 people to hospitals throughout the city. Most of the injured suffered from burns and smoke inhalation. Twenty survivors are said to be in serious condition.

Latest reports indicate that an electrical spark started the fire, which spread rapidly, overwhelming the partygoers inside. Lennart Olin, who headed the rescue services, said the scene reminded him 'of the gas chambers at Auschwitz'. Smoke and toxic fumes suffocated the majority of those who died.

Some press reports raised the possibility of a racist motive for the blaze. The fire occurred at a private party being held in a part of the building rented by a local Macedonian association. The dead are said to include many Yugoslavians.

Police official Jan Edmundson said 'there was an explosion', but Police Commissioner Hans Carlsson said indications were that the fire was accidental.



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