**10 dead, including 5 children, as fire rips through apartment block in Lyon, France**

[](https://www.cnn.com/profiles/kathleen-magramo)

By Teele Rebane, [Joseph Ataman](https://www.cnn.com/profiles/joseph-ataman) and [Kathleen Magramo](https://www.cnn.com/profiles/kathleen-magramo), CNN

Updated 5:27 AM EST, Fri December 16, 2022



Firefighters and rescuers in Vaulx-en-Velin, a suburb of the French city of Lyon, on Friday.

Olivier Chassignole/AFP/Getty Images

**ParisCNN —**

At least 10 people, including five children, were killed when a fire broke out Friday morning at an eight-story apartment building in a suburb of the French city of Lyon.

Four people are in critical condition, and another ten, including two firefighters, suffered minor injuries from the blaze in the town of Vaulx-en-Velin, the regional authority of Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes said in a statement.

French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said the children who were killed ranged from ages 3 to 15. The fire has since been put out.

“It’s obviously a shock, the death toll is extremely serious,” Darmanin told journalists.

French Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne called the incident “tragic” and offered her solidarity and support to the victims and their loved ones.

A local resident named Sarem, who lives 100 meters (328 feet) from the building, told CNN affiliate BFMTV that he had heard children shouting from a fourth-floor balcony at around 2:25 a.m. and that a group of residents used a ladder to evacuate 25 people from the second floor.

[© Mapbox](https://www.mapbox.com/about/maps/) [© OpenStreetMap](https://www.openstreetmap.org/about/) [**Improve this map**](https://apps.mapbox.com/feedback/?owner=mapbox&id=streets-v11&access_token=pk.eyJ1IjoiY25uZGlnaXRhbCIsImEiOiJja21mOG9qZXkwMDdhMnVtcnl3OWwxcHhxIn0.edemYdT0TKm7F8Wf2Y5zUA)

The flames “weren’t violent,” he said, but there was a lot of smoke and “the people who were crying for help couldn’t breathe.”

Around 170 firefighters and 65 fire engines were sent to the scene, the regional authority said.

Emergency services were alerted about 3:12 a.m. local time on Friday morning, the authority said, and arrived at the scene 13 minutes later.

The fire broke out on the ground floor of the structure, Major Geoffrey Casu, a spokesman for the National Federation of Firefighters, told French broadcaster LCI on Friday. Because smoke filled internal evacuation routes, evacuations were only possible through the exterior of the building using ladders, which complicated the rescue, Casu said.

The inferno went on to engulf the top three floors of the building, according to BFMTV. It was put out at around 6 a.m.



A police officer stands by near the scene of the blaze

Laurent Cipriani/AP



About 170 firefighters were deployed to the scene early Friday.

Olivier Chassignole/AFP/Getty Images

Rida, another resident who lived just in front of the apartment building, told BFMTV he and his child were awakened by the chaos at about 3 in the morning. Police had blocked the route and firefighters were already on the scene. He said he heard a father screaming “my children, my children, save my children.”

The source of the fire is still being investigated, and local prosecutors said in a statement that an investigation has been opened to determine exactly what caused the fire. Nothing, including “criminal intent,” has been ruled out, the statement said.

Technical teams from the judicial police and forensic and fire experts are on the site. Victim support associations have also been mobilized, the statement said.

The prefect of the Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes region, Pascal Mailhos, the mayor of Vaulx-en-Valin, Hélène Geoffrey, and a public prosecutor Nicolas Jacquet traveled to the scene of the incident, the regional authority said. Darmanin and Olivier Klein, the French minister of housing, visited the scene and met with first responders later on Friday.

CNN’s Marguerite Lacroix contributed to this report