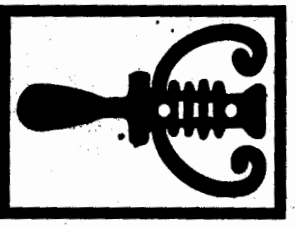


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Last eight crew members of ship M.T. Tana, which exploded in Lagos, were rescued.

Telecom firms in Lagos den over erection of masts, towers

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Crew members, others feared dead in Lagos ship explosion

IT was a tragic afternoon for maritime business yesterday when an oil vessel exploded at the Berger Depot in Apapa, Lagos. Last night, casualty from the incident was a yet-to-be-known number of deaths and wounded victims. The fire outbreak was said to have occurred at about 2.00 p.m. from the engine room of the ship, *M.T. Tana*, and spread rapidly to the cabin and other parts. One of the crew members who escaped the explosion told *The Guardian* that the ship came from Cotonou, Benin Republic, about four days ago and there was a serious problem in the engine room. He said: "Since then, the chief engineer on board instructed that the

By Alex Olie, Seye Olumide and Oloriwa Aliu engine must not be on because there was a mixture of petrol and diesel oil inside the engine room such that it was difficult for anybody to stay inside. "But unfortunately, while the chief engineer and the captain left the ship, somebody unknowingly switched

on the engine and it exploded," he said. The crew member added: "The condition of those in the engine room could not be ascertained but I believe they must have died. Some of the crew members in the cabin were badly injured by the explosion and had since been rushed to hospital." Julius Berger and

ASCON Fire Service were the first to arrive at the scene to put out the fire before the members of the Federal Fire Service and Lagos State Fire Service joined them. In a bid to avoid further disaster, the ship was later pulled away into the sea from the tanks of the ports. Persons believed to

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Anxiety over crew members, others as ship explodes

Continued from Page 1 from them since the explosion occurred were crying, calling their cell

phone numbers intermittently.

Another crew member, who escaped the explosion, told *The Guardian* that three of his friends were inside the engine room when the explosion occurred and that he had not heard from them after.

A lady, Olivia Uzoh, was also waiting at the scene asking after his brother, who she identified as Friday.

Following the mysterious explosion, the authorities of the Western Naval Command promptly deployed their men to the scene.

The spokesperson of the command, Lieutenant Commander Ayo Vaughan, said officers were on ground to curtail the situation.

According to him, it is too early to ascertain the cause and number of victims involved in the explosion.

Also, the Lagos State Police Command has deployed a team of policemen to beef-up security at the port.

The Commissioner of Police, Mr. Emmanuel Adebayo, yesterday directed the Apapa Police Division to tighten security at the scene with a view to checking hoodlums who might use the opportunity to siphon oil or cause other havoc within the port.

The Navy, policemen and Red Cross officials from the Lagos State government were at the scene attempting to rescue the victims.

The incident occurred barely a month after 200 persons lost their lives in a pipeline explosion at Ilado Vil-