


Pipeline Explosion Rocks Lagos

• Baby, 4, Dies



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WHAT could have been a major fire disaster was averted yesterday when the combined efforts of local people, fire fighters, securi-

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Pipeline Explosion Rocks Ije-Ododo Community In Lagos

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by officers and officials of the Products and Pipelines Marketing Company (PPMC) stopped fire from a burst pipeline from engulfing the Ije-Ododo community in Lagos.

According to residents of the community, the explosion occurred around 10am yesterday, and by 3pm huge billows of smoke could be seen in the area, just as efforts to control the fire was hampered by the difficulty of the terrain.

PPMC officials revealed that the fire erupted after vandals cracked open the pipeline transporting petroleum products from the Escravos Jetty to Mosimi, Ogun State.

The presence of security officials also prevented people from scooping the flowing fuel — an action that had caused

conflagrations at other exposed pipelines.

The explosion and fires cause panic in the community, with scores of the residents fleeing the area immediately the incident was noticed. A young lady, who gave her name as Cynthia Lukman, lamented that her mother had fled the house.

Lagos Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Bode Oluji-mi said the Pipeline vandalism section of the police is still investigating the matter, in order to ascertain the true cause of the explosion. Oluji-mi said information available to the police showed that a baby died of exhaustion arising from the heat around the burning shanties.

Sadiq Ahmed, a teenage resident of the community, said it took almost two hours for fire fighters to arrive, and

even when they came, they struggled to bring the fire under control.

A fire fighter confirmed that the distress calls of the residents were received around 10am. Yet, as at 3pm, efforts to bring the fire under appreciable control did not take off. O

One of the two fire fighting trucks, which arrived at the site of the explosion, could not proceed towards the point where the fire was raging. The trucks, with registration number XG 629 AKD (Lagos) from the NNPC, were stuck in the mud and could not move closer to the raging fire.

Owolabi Michael of the National Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDS), who had arrived at the site earlier, said, "the terrain was too swampy for the trucks to move close."

Apart from the difficult and

swampy terrain, most of the pipes that were attached to the fire trucks were leaking, thus making it impossible for the water to be transported to the point of the raging fire.

The Public Affairs Manager of PPMC, Ralph Ugwu, told *The Guardian* that the corporation's engineers had succeeded in sealing the exposed spot, although reports said fire at the spot was still burning by press time. Ugwu said his men would work with the police and NSCDS to prevent future occurrences.

The *Baale* of Ije-Ododo, Alhaji Tajudeen Suberu told *The Guardian* that the indigenes of his community had no hands in the matter, stating that the plank bridge, which provided shabby access to the spot, was constructed by the NNPC when the community lodged complaints of vandalism.