

Blast kills two suspected fuel thieves in Ondo

From Julius Alabi, Akure

TWO persons alleged to be siphoning fuel from a petroleum tanker were feared killed when the vehicle exploded on Wednesday.

The incident occurred at Orita-Ojo town in Odigbo Local Council of Ondo State.

Eight other persons, who were said to have been seriously injured, are now receiving treatment at Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital, Ile-Ife.

Witness account indicated that the incident occurred around 12.30 p.m. as some people were trying to scoop fuel from a petroleum tanker, which was said to have developed fault and parked at the town by its driver.

The Guardian learnt that the driver had gone to an unknown destination apparently to look for a mechanic to repair the vehicle when the incident happened.

It was learnt that the tanker, loaded with fuel, was coming from Lagos, but had mechanical problem along the Orita-Ojo junction.

But another account was that the tanker fell while trying to avoid an oncoming vehicle as some youths in the area were said to have capitalised on the absence of the tanker's driver and siphoned fuel from the truck.

They, however, ran out of luck as the tanker exploded while they were still carrying out their illegal act. Two of them were said to have died on the spot while eight were rushed to the hospital.

The Head of Operations, Ondo State Command of the Federal Road Safety Commission, Mr. Irelewuyi Adeoye, who confirmed the incident, said only one person died.

He said that some youth allegedly siphoned fuel from the tanker, which broke down in the area.