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Daily Independent (Lagos)**Nigeria: Ten Killed in Lagos Pipeline Explosion**

16 December 2010

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Lagos — Lagos witnessed another pipeline explosion on Thursday in which about 10 people were feared dead and about 17 declared missing.

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The explosion occurred in Idu, a few kilometres from Ijegan, where about 100 died in a previous oil fire on May 16, 2008.

The pipeline in the latest incident, which supplies product from Ejigbo through Satellite Town to Ijegan has had leakages around Idu-Ijegan.

Eyewitnesses said large quantities of petroleum products that were not properly cleaned up from the breach caught fire.

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Pipeline Product Marketing Company (PPMC) Spokesperson, Ralph Ugwu, explained that a spill around a pipeline that had just been repaired caught fire from the bush, but "the fire has been extinguished as I am talking to you now. There was no casualty and no property is loss."

However, eyewitnesses confirmed that several people died in the stampede that followed the incident and others received injuries.

"There was a terrible stampede because many of us witnessed the incident in Ijegan a few kilometres from here. The fear of being caught in the trap led to the stampede," said an eyewitness, who identified herself simply as Gloria.

"You cannot ascertain the number of casualty for now. One thing sure is that many people have been declared missing."

On May 16, 2008 a pipeline explosion occurred in Ijegan, a suburb north of Lagos, after a bulldozer struck the pipeline.

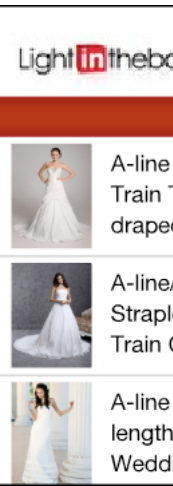
Construction workers broke an underground pipeline from which fuel spilled out and caught fire.

The fire started from the Isolo end, and spread to the surrounding homes and schools, including Ijegan Primary School.

More than 15 homes were destroyed and about 100 lives were lost.

Fuel not properly cleaned up after the rupture has found its way into wells from where

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prevent the fire in Ijgun.

Senate Spokesman Ayogu Eze argued that the disaster would have been averted if the NNPC had responded quickly to the complaints of pressure on the pipelines by heavy vehicles.

"The Senate frowns at the handling of the problem by the NNPC and it is indeed an unfortunate situation. It is unfortunate that at this stage we are not able to police our pipelines.

"It is true that pipeline fire has become a recurring issue, we can no longer fold our hands and allow this to continue," Eze said.

The House of Representatives Committee on Petroleum Resources (Downstream) also criticised the NNPC.

House PPMC Sub-committee, headed by Doris Uboh, said the NNPC was careless by allowing traders to cover the pipeline's right of way with kiosks and other makeshift structures.

ERA/FoEN monitors who visited Ijgun on September 13 last year observed that all wells in the axis of the explosion and 14 streets away had large deposits of petrol that could be ignited by the strike of a match.

ERA/FoEN recommended that the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) should immediately carry out a comprehensive environmental audit of the community, mop up petroleum products in wells, and compensate residents.

The Senate has blamed the NNPC for its inability to

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