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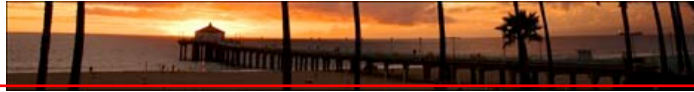
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Leadership (Abuja)

Nigeria: Tanker Accident Claims 10

Chika Mefor

25 July 2010

Abuja — About 10 people were feared burnt to death when a petroleum tanker vehicle transporting fuel fell on its side and caught fire at Madalla Market, Suleja, Niger State. Suleja, on the outskirts of Abuja, is a high density neighborhood with low-priced houses, and home to hundreds of workers who shuttle from there to their places of work in the Federal Capital Territory.

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Sixteen other people were also said to be injured and are now receiving treatment at various hospitals in the town.

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Property including stalls and vehicles trapped in the fire were also destroyed. As the time of going to pres, the police had not confirmed the number of deaths or injured. However, assisting the police to clear up the accident scene, and restore flow of clogged traffic were men and officers of the Federal Road Safety Corps, (FRSC), the Fire Service, Civil Defence Corps and the National Emergency Management Authority (NEMA).

Madalla Market, Suleja is on the busy Kaduna-Abuja Expressway and, in recent times, there had been concerted but unsuccessful efforts to relocate it elsewhere. Eyewitness account narrates that the incident occurred around 12 noon when the tanker was believed to have had a brake failure and rammed into a vehicle before falling on its side and bursting into fire which quickly spread to other vehicles and stalls in the market.

LEADERSHIP gathered that 16 people burnt in the inferno were taken to nearby Lucas Hospital and Maternity Madalla, where they were receiving treatment. "Two of the hospitalized persons are said to be in critical condition. We are doing every possible thing to ease their pain" the doctor on call said, but refused to give his name. Three others were taken to the General Hospital, Suleja.

The chairman of Suleja Local Government Area, Malam Rabi Barde, who arrived the scene soon after, described the incident as pitiable, adding that efforts were being made to assist the victims.

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