

Vandals in military camouflage invade Arepo



About three policemen may have been killed in the Arepo area of Ogun State after a pipeline belonging to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), which was severely ruptured following a gun duel, exploded.

It was gathered that over 360 suspected vandals dressed in military camouflage stormed the area in 12 speed boats.

Eyewitness said some policemen from the Anti-Pipeline Task Force had moved to the area following on a security alert that the vandals had struck again.

The vandals were said to have attempted to scare off the policemen with gun shots while attempting to make away with some of the stolen products. In the process, bullets hit the pipeline and it exploded.

While the casualty number was yet to be ascertained, eyewitnesses claimed the explosion must have injured both the policemen and the vandals as they were still within reach of the pipeline when it erupted.

The South-West zonal spokesperson of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Mr. Ibrahim Farinloye, said: "Although we are yet to ascertain what transpired that set off the pipelines, we suspect that the explosion must have been caused by fireballs during the exchange of gun fire.

"The police were alerted late Saturday night that vandals had again struck at Arepo. The team set off to investigate, but the vandals tried to pursue them with guns, but the police repelled them. However, due to the ruggedness of the terrain, we have not been able to carry out rescue operations there; so at the moment, we can't ascertain the casualty number."

Yesterday, Farinloye said four policemen were rescued alive, adding that members of the emergency team

were still working tirelessly.

Force Public Relations Officer, Mr Frank Mba told *The Nation* yesterday that the fire was still raging. He added that he could not yet ascertain the number of policemen allegedly trapped in the inferno. He said investigation was ongoing.