

## Two confirmed killed, 25 injured as explosion rocks CBN in Calabar

Posted By: Nicholas KALU, Calabar and Collins NWEZE on: March 12, 2016 In: Featured, News No Comments



explosion

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has attributed yesterday's fire incident at its Calabar Branch in Cross River State to gas explosion.

A statement signed by CBN's Acting Director, Corporate Communications, Ugochukwu Okorafor, said the fire, which broke out at about 12 noon in the banking hall of the premises, was apparently caused by a gas explosion from air conditioners in the building undergoing some refurbishment at the moment.

"As soon as the incident occurred, the CBN emergency alert system was activated, the Fire Service was called in, and the fire was immediately brought under control," the statement said.

He added that following the explosion and fire, about 25 persons sustained various levels of injury, and is currently receiving treatment at hospitals in Calabar while four of the injured have been discharged.

"We are, however, very saddened to confirm that two of the critically injured, a CBN staff and a construction worker, have died at the hospital. We are now working with the bereaved families to determine next steps. More details will be made known to the public in due course," it said.



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The Cross River State Government called for calm after the explosion that destroyed a substantial part of the edifice and left casualties.

Speaking after appraising the level of damage caused by the explosion, the State Deputy Governor, Professor Ivara Esu, called on the public to exercise restraint in peddling rumours until results of investigations emerge.

He expressed shock at the enormity of devastation.

Professor Esu pledged the support of the state government to the bank and its staff to enable it continue normal operations while investigation and rehabilitation work last.

He conveyed the sympathy of the government and people of the state on the disaster, stating that the government would work closely with the bank and other stakeholders to ensure the successful management of the ugly incident.

State Controller of the CBN in Calabar, Dr Graham Kalio, said the explosion occurred suddenly in the

Banking hall with its attendant destructive effects resonating across the building.

He said affected staff have been taken for treatment at the University of Calabar Teaching Hospital (UCTH) and Navy Hospital Calabar.

Men of the Police, Army, Navy, Civil Defence and other paramilitary organisations were drafted to the scene.

At the gate of the bank, relatives of staff were seen crying. They demanded to see relatives working in the bank.

Officials of the bank refused to comment. "We are traumatised right now. No one can talk," one of them said.

The Commissioner of Police, Henry Faidairo inspected the scene.

The Acting Inspector General of Police, Zone 6, Calabar, Baba-Adisa Bolanta, who also inspected the scene, said the explosion was suspected to be from gas from the central air-conditioning unit.

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