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12 feared dead in Lagos tanker fire accident • 5 houses, 15 vehicles razed

Written by Olalekan Olabulo -Lagos | Thursday, 09 January 2014 00:00 | font size | Print | Email

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NO fewer than 12 people were, between late Tuesday and early Wednesday, burnt to death, while many were injured and goods worth millions of naira destroyed at the popular Berger area of Apapa, Lagos.

While officials of the Lagos State government said only five bodies were picked from the scene, eyewitnesses insisted that at least 12 bodies were counted before the arrival of government officials.

A branch of a bank in the area, four buildings and about 15 vehicles were completely burnt, while three other houses were partly burnt in the inferno.

Hoodlums also reportedly took advantage of the confusion created by the incident to loot money and office items, including computers from the affected bank.

Nigerian Tribune gathered that the fire started from a lone incident, involving an articulated truck, which was conveying 33,000 litres of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), popularly known as petrol.

The fire, which started around 10.00 p.m on Tuesday, was put out around 1.30 a.m on Wednesday by fire fighters from Capital Oil, Julius Berger Construction Company, Swift Oil, Lagos State Fire



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Emergency Services and other fire fighters.

Casualties included the driver of the truck, his motor boy, a fruit seller at Berger Suya Bus Stop and the occupants of three buses, whose drivers were picking passengers at the bus stop.

Okey Udeagba, president of Berger Business Community, while speaking with the Nigerian Tribune, said traders at the affected market lost more than N100 million due to the closure of the market on Wednesday.

"I am dumbfounded This is a monumental loss. Government and corporate bodies should come to the aid of the traders. Today alone, we have lost about N100 million," Udeagba said.

A trader at the spare parts market, who simply identified himself as Onyema, told the Nigerian Tribune that the truck was coming from Kirikiri when it had brake failure, while efforts by the driver to halt its movement caused it to tumble.

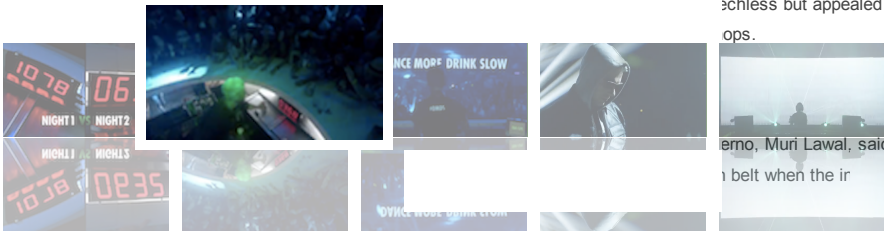
The content of the tanker was said to have spilled on the road and spread to where a barbecue seller was roasting his meat, causing a loud explosion.

Another trader, Okechukwu Nnamdi, who claimed he lost about N8 million to the inferno, stated that the arrival of fire fighters prevented the fire from consuming the entire community.

The trader, who deals in heavy truck spare parts and industrial engine, said he watched in agony as the fire consumed all he had in one of the burnt shops.

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