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Two killed, many houses destroyed as truck rams gas tanker in Delta

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TWO persons were burnt beyond recognition and over 30 houses and properties worth millions of naira destroyed on Thursday as a truck conveying granite rammed a tanker laden with Liquefied Petroleum Gas in Ohoror community in Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State.

However, the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Bright Edafe said he could only confirm the death of one person and destruction of

properties.

Sources said the incident occurred on Thursday morning at about 3:00 a.m when residents of the community were still in bed.

The granite truck was said to have rammed the stationary LPG tanker parked at Ohoror junction axis of the East/West road.

An indigene of the community, Mr Dennis Israel, said the truck, loaded with granite, was heading towards Port Harcourt from Ughelli when the driver lost control of the vehicle.

In the process, the truck hit other tankers parked by the roadside, leading

to a huge explosion.

According to Israel, the driver of the LPG tanker, his conductor and over 30 houses were burnt.

"The tankers drivers double-parked on the roadside and the granite truck rammed one of them, which fell on the parked ones and the products loaded immediately poured out.

"About four trucks were parked along the road with different products ranging from diesel, kerosene to gas, and when the accident occurred, the tanker with diesel fell and emptied all its content on the ground. From there, the fire destroyed every-

thing," he narrated.

One of the surviving victims of the explosion, Sapele Clement, said it was between 2:00 a.m. and 3:00 a.m when they heard a loud explosion and a huge fire enveloped the area.

Sapele said: "We want the government to come to our aid as we have been left with nothing; all our properties we laboured for have gone down the drain in a twinkling of an eye."

Meanwhile, Governor Ifeanyi Okowa on Thursday called for immediate assessment of the cause of the explosion.

Okowa gave the direc-

tive when he visited the scene of the incident.

He commiserated with the community and gave assurances that government would take steps to cushion the effects of the inferno on victims.

The governor directed the Director of the Delta State Fire Service, Mr Eugene Oziwele, to remain on ground until the fire was completely extinguished and other oil trucks posing a threat to the community were evacuated.

Okowa, who was accompanied by the Speaker of the House of Assembly, Chief Sheriff Oborewori, and Secretary to

the State Government (SSG), Chief Patrick Ukah, commended the men of the fire service for their prompt response.

He advised the community to keep off the fire scene and be vigilant to avoid further loss of lives, adding that government was working hard to contain the spread of the explosion.

Briefing the governor earlier, Mr Oziwele said his men were alerted at dawn and he quickly mobilised to the community.

He added that fire-fighting trucks were mobilised from Ughelli to ensure that the fire was extinguished.