

# Three dead, seven missing as petroleum vessel explodes in Nigerian waters

## We're investigating cause of explosion —NUPRC

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Tola Adenubi and Adetola Bademosi

THREE seafarers have been confirmed dead while the whereabouts of seven others remain unknown after a Floating Production, Storage and Offloading (FPSO) Vessel, Trinity Spirit, exploded on Wednesday, causing raging fire and threatening fishing activities in some of Nigeria's riverine communities in the Niger Delta area.

According to findings, an explosion was heard at about 1:00 a.m. on Wednes-

day around Meren oil facility offshore Escravos.

The FPSO vessel produces crude oil and is situated around Meren, a North Field oil facility belonging to a multi-national oil and gas company in the Escravos area of Warri South-West Local Government Area of Delta State.

One of the seafarers on-board a nearby oil platform told the **Nigerian Tribune** exclusively that: "The explosion has caused serious fear among workers manning oil facilities close by, including fishermen around the area.

"Three persons have been confirmed dead, while the whereabouts of seven others is

still unknown.

"The explosion is a threat to Nigeria's ecosystem. We have to look at it from the point of whether it is an active rig or not. Its content matters, irrespective of whether it's an active rig or not, the fact that it has exploded is a threat to fishing in Nigeria's riverine communities.

"Its contents are already spilled in the waters around communities close to where it exploded, and that means no fishing for these communities.

"Three bodies have been seen, but seven others who were on the FPSO when it exploded are cur-

rently unaccounted for."

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Meanwhile, the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) on Thursday said it has commenced investigation into the cause of explosion at Ukpokiti field (OML 108).

In a statement issued by its spokesperson, Paul Osu, the Commission said there were no reported cases of any casualties or fatalities.

It assured that it would take necessary measures to ensure that all safety and environmental measures in line with global best practices to safeguard lives and the environment were put in place.