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## Pipeline explosion kills NNPC manager

By Clara Nwachukwu

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Another pipeline explosion has left an official of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation dead, and three others with various degrees of burns.



File

Acting Group Managing  
Director, NNPC, Engr.  
Abubakar Yar'Adua

The explosion, which occurred on Tuesday night in Arepo village, Ogun State, is coming on the heels of a fire explosion at the Ibadan Depot of the corporation, which occurred on Saturday.

The Ibadan incident had left a yet-to-be-identified staff of the depot dead and another, who was on duty when a spark occurred at the loading bay, severely burnt.

The incident led to the shutting down of the Ibadan depot, which had since been re-opened for normal loading operations.

There are conflicting casualty figures in the two incidents, but an electronic statement from the NNPC on Wednesday confirmed the death of "a senior staff of the corporation," and added that "three others sustained severe injuries while attempting to put out the fire at the scene of the incident."

The statement, which was signed by the Group General Manager, Group Public Affairs, NNPC, Dr. Levi Ajuonuma, said, "The injured are already being taken care of by the corporation at the NNPC Medical Centre in Mosimi, Lagos, in line with the corporation's policy of caring for its workforce."

Our correspondent gathered that NNPC officials had gone to ascertain the extent of damage to a line break as a result of pipeline vandalism along the Atlas Cove-Mosimi Systems 2B pipeline when a sudden explosion occurred.

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The inspection team included the Maintenance Manager, who lost his life; a pipeline engineer, an accountant and an auditor working for the Pipelines and Products Marketing Company, the marketing arm of the NNPC and owners of the pipeline.

The NNPC sources said, "The corporation is making plans to evacuate our men who were burnt in the explosion for higher medical attention. The hazards of our operations are enormous because we are dealing with hydrocarbons, which are highly inflammable."

The NNPC, in its statement, said, "Despite the incident, the corporation has detailed engineers to effect repairs on the damaged pipeline, in addition to putting up measures that will ensure that the supply and distribution of petroleum products are not disrupted."

The corporation assured the public that it had enough stock of petroleum products that would last for over one month, even in the absence of fresh supplies.

It added, "The corporation has adequate supplies to cover the upcoming festive periods of Sallah, Christmas and the New Year.

"Specifically, the corporation has stock of petrol that will last for 35 days and also sufficient stock of kerosene that will last for 30 days. The corporation has made a lot of efforts to build up the stock in order to sustain the tempo of distribution and supplies nationwide."

The corporation re-assured that there would be no scarcity as a result of the incidents, in spite of the fact that fire was still burning at the site as at press time.

NNPC said it had put other units in the South-East and Niger Delta on the alert to make up for any shortfalls from the Systems 2B supplies.

Besides, it is also using other private depots including NIPCo Plc, Obat Petroleum, Folawiyo Oil and Gas, and MRS Oil and Gas for products supply.

The NNPC noted that as much as it was committed to living up to its responsibility of ensuring adequate products supply to all Nigerians, it was, however, challenged by the continued incidences of pipeline vandalism.

It said, "Vandalism remained the greatest threat to effective and efficient supply and distribution of petroleum products.

"For example, the NNPC suffered 971 cases of pipeline vandalism in 2004, 2,258 in 2005 and 2,912 cases in 2006 and a substantial number this year."

It was almost one year after a similar explosion occurred at Abule Egba, in Lagos, in which hundreds lost their lives and many more suffered various degrees of burns.

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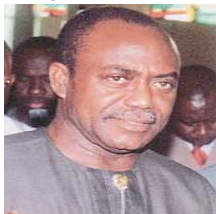
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