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Tuesday, 7 December 2010

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One dies, goods, tankers burnt in A'Ibom, Niger fires

By Kazeem Ibrahym and Mike Odiegwu

Thursday, 2 Dec 2010

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One person was feared dead on Wednesday in a fire which burnt two tankers on the Abak-Ikot Ekpene Expressway near Abak in Akwa Ibom State.

In Minna, the Niger State capital, goods estimated at N150 million were destroyed in an inferno that razed a business complex, throwing traders into misery.

An eyewitness told THE PUNCH that two tankers loaded with petroleum products collided on Abak-Ikot Ekpene Expressway around 4am. Firemen from the Akwa Ibom State Fire Service aided by Julius Berger Plc. workers battled the blaze for about three hours before they finally put it out.

The incident caused a gridlock on the road as motorists sought alternative routes to their destinations. The Commissioner of Police, Akwa Ibom State Command, Mr. Sani Magaji, who visited the scene, said that the situation had been brought under control.

Magaji explained that the fire was caused by the collision and advised the people of Abak not to take laws into their hands. The State Commissioner for Information, Mr. Aniekan Umanah, who visited the scene, sympathised with the families of the deceased.

Umanah described the accident as 'an unfortunate and unforeseen calamity' and appealed to the people of the area to assist government agencies in clearing the debris.

He thanked the police commissioner for visiting the scene and noted that the new Abak-Ikot Ekpene dual carriageway was constructed by Governor Godswill Akpabio in order to open up the area to economic activities.

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Meanwhile, THE PUNCH learnt that the Minna inferno, which began around 1am, caused pandemonium around the complex located opposite the campaign office of former head of state, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida (ret'd).

The huge fire lit up the popular Mobil Roundabout and defied attempts by residents, traders and firemen to quench it. Four shops in the complex were completely razed, making it impossible for their owners to salvage anything.

The cause of the inferno, which also destroyed two large photo laboratories and a popular fashion outfit known as De Moore, could not be ascertained. However, a resident claimed that the fire could have been caused by an electric spark.

The owner of the fashion shop, Mr. Robinson Akubuike, said he was asleep when he received a call that his shop was on fire. Akubuike, who broke down in tears as he spoke, said the shop had goods worth over N70m.

"Everything I have worked for in my life was burnt in that fire. I just came back from the market where I bought goods for sale for the season. I could not rescue anything because the fire had already overtaken the building before I arrived," he said.

Akubuike and other affected traders, however, appealed to the National Emergency Management Agency and the Niger State Governor, Dr. Babangida Aliyu, to come to their aid.

Comments :

- I would like to hear details of the collision from Kopkufre whom I believe is a very courageous Nigerian. His comment on this is very scanty and has given no lead hence it's absolutely difficult to nab the Police. Should this noble Nigerian not have anything to convince us, I think he ought to apologise to Nigerians and the Police for raising such alarm.

Posted by: Parry Bassey , on Thursday, December 02, 2010

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- It was the police that caused the accident... in fact, the current fuel scarcity in Akwa Ibom is similar incident between the NPF and tanker driver. I just hope ur eyewitness is not one of these coward Nigerians.

Posted by: kopkufre , on Thursday, December 02, 2010

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