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Scores feared dead in pipeline explosion

MARCH 16, 2014 BY ENIOLA AKINKUOTU AND UDEME EKWERE 1 COMMENT

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A peninsula in the Ijegan area of Lagos State was gutted by fire after a pipeline conveying petroleum product was vandalised on Saturday.

Though details of the incident remained sketchy as of press time, emergency management agencies said the casualty figure could be high because the peninsula was still inaccessible to them as of Saturday night, several hours after it went up in flames.

The development comes a few weeks after pipeline vandals caused a massive spillage

in the same area causing scores of residents to relocate.

The spokesperson, National Emergency Management Agency, South-West Zone, Ibrahim Farinloye, told *SUNDAY PUNCH* that the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation had cut supply to the affected pipelines.

He said, "On Sunday evening, we discovered that pipeline vandals damaged a pipeline around a peninsula at Ijegan, not too far from where the last pipeline rupture occurred.

"Presently, I cannot give the casualty figure because the area is not accessible but we will know by tomorrow (Sunday). NNPC has, however, cut supply to the affected pipelines."

The Director, Lagos State Fire Service, Razaq Fadipe, told our correspondent on the telephone that his agency was also not able to access the place.

Fadipe said he had reason to believe that the leakage was diesel and not petrol.

Meanwhile, another near air mishap was averted on Saturday as a Medview Airline flight 2102 departing Lagos to Abuja returned to the airport shortly after takeoff.

This was as a result of a false smoke alarm at 9:12 am on Saturday.

A statement by the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency, said the captain of the aircraft informed the Control Tower of the development and came back to land immediately.

It added that the Boeing 734 aircraft marked 5NBPB with 99 passengers and five crew onboard landed at the Lagos airport safely at 9:17am on Runway 18 Left.

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