

METRO PLUS

Seven die, eight injured in Lagos gas explosions

Published January 16, 2018

Share

Tweet

 Share



Samson Folarin

No fewer than seven people lost their lives on Monday after gas explosions rocked the Ikosi Isheri and Badagry areas of Lagos State.

While two people died after a gas leakage triggered an explosion in a gas plant on CMD Road, Ikosi Isheri, five residents were killed after a gas transload went awry in a retail shop in Ajara, Badagry.

PUNCH Metro gathered that Ikosi Isheri explosion occurred around 7.30am in a gas plant, Second Coming Nigeria Limited.

Aside from the two people who were burnt beyond recognition, eight others reportedly suffered varying degrees of burns.

of a speeding vehicle triggered an explosion.

Workers of the company, together with a firefighter, were said to have been thrown off by the impact of the explosion, as the fire consumed equipment and installations in the facility.

The inferno destroyed three gas reservoir tanks, a 33,000-litre gas truck, the administrative block of the plant, generators, gas cylinders and other equipment.

When our correspondent visited the scene, he observed various emergency management agencies on the ground, including officials of the state and federal fire services, Lagos State Emergency Management Agency, National Emergency Management Agency, Red Cross, Neighbourhood Watch, Department of Petroleum Resources, Lagos State Ambulance Service, Federal Road Safety Corps and the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority.

Operatives of the Rapid Response Squad, as well as policemen from the Isheri, Alausa and Mile 12 police stations, led by their Divisional Police Officers, cordoned off the area as residents watched the burning gas plant from a distance.

A security man guarding a telecommunications mast in the area said the gas leakage occurred on Sunday.

He said, "When I woke up around 6am today (Monday), I perceived a strong smell. When I came out, I saw some firefighters on the gas plant's premises. They were bringing in their vehicles and equipment. My friend, who works with the plant, told me they had a gas leakage and that they had been battling it since yesterday (Sunday) evening.

"Some policemen were also on the ground to stop vehicles from plying the route. Suddenly, I heard an explosion. Some destitute Hausa men, who had a makeshift structure outside the fence of the gas station, were burnt to death. My friend was severely injured."

A police officer, who was on the ground when the explosion started, said it was triggered by the exhaust pipe of a passing vehicle, adding that the fire rapidly spread in the gas plant.

There was a heap of sand around the purported leakage point.

A source said the leakage could not be stopped because there was a problem with the valve.

The Director of the Lagos State Fire Service, Rasak Fadipe, confirmed that a firefighter sustained an injury in the explosion.

Fadipe noted that the agency deployed six fire trucks from the Alausa, Ikeja, Ilupeju, Isolo and Bolade divisions in the scene.

He said, “We received a distress call at 7.16am and arrived at the scene around 7.21am. There was no fire as of then. The gas was rushing out and making a horrible noise from one of the pipes. We were speaking with the operators of the plant to look for where the central valve was so that we could shut it. That was what we intended doing when a speeding vehicle caused the fire. It was a severe fire explosion.

“A set of compressor machines, a set of gas dispensing pumps, the gas peddling truck, the diesel-driven generator, the surface pumps, all went up in flames. My men were on the premises with some other persons when the fire erupted. Because of our early response with two water trucks, we started the firefighting operation. When I discovered that it had resulted in fire, I had to deploy more water vehicles to complement the ones on the ground.”

The General Manager of LASEMA, Adeshina Tiamiyu, said the agency mobilised emergency management workers to the scene.

He said, “We found two people who were burnt to death at the back of the building. We found a hut and cooking utensils there. Their bodies have been taken to the mortuary.

“There were also eight people who had various degrees of injury. Some had partial burns, lacerations and cuts, all in a bid to escape from the raging fire when it started.

assessment is completed.

“There are still two loaded gas tanks in the plant. So, it is not safe to work there. We will allow the fire service to do its work to ensure things are in order. However, I can assure Magodo residents that they are safe and there will not be a re-ignition of the fire.”

The Commander of the RRS, Olatunji Disu, said security agents moved residents to safety and cordoned off the area.

He explained that together with the three DPOs in the area, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Operations), Biodun Alamutu, who represented the state Commissioner of Police, Edgal Imohimi, the police would monitor the situation till normalcy returned.

The General Manager of LASTMA, Olawale Musa, said the agency diverted traffic from the scene.

“We got an alert on the incident early this morning (Monday) and we closed both ends of the road to stop motorists from accessing the scene. We had to divert traffic from the area,” he said.

An official of the gas plant, who gave his name only as Onyekachi, said the value of the property destroyed was much.

“Explosion can be caused by anything in a gas plant environment. In a gas plant environment, anything can happen. There were casualties, but they were rushed to the Accident and Emergency Centre, Toll Gate. Some of them were our workers,” he said.

A top medical source at the Accident and Emergency Centre said six survivors were rushed to the centre, adding that they were immediately referred to the Gbagada General Hospital.

Another top medical source at the Gbagada General Hospital said two of the victims were received at the hospital.

“They are both in stable condition. Maybe the others chose to go to different hospitals or they simply left for their homes,” he added.

The Public Affairs Officer of the Lagos State Fire Service, Shakiru Amodu, said three mutilated corpses were recovered from the scene, adding that the fire also affected a mechanic workshop beside the retail shop.

He said, “It is a gas retail shop built in front of a one-storeyed building at Ajara Vedo Night Market, Ajara, Badagry. The building collapsed due to the intensity of the fire.

“We were attending to the Magodo gas explosion when we got a distress call to the explosion around 8.30am.

“Investigations revealed that they were trying to transfer gas from one point to another when the explosion occurred. The casualties included two males and one female. Their bodies were mutilated. Three others were injured. The victims were the operators of the gas refill plant.”

The Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer, SP Chike Oti, confirmed the two gas explosions, adding that five people died in the Badagry explosion.

He said, “At about 8.30am, fire gutted a retail gas shop on Ajara Vedo, Badagry. The fire was put out by teams of policemen and firefighters mobilised to the scene.

“Five persons and two shops were consumed by the fire, while two people were rescued with injuries and taken to the Badagry General Hospital for treatment. The corpses were deposited in the hospital’s mortuary for autopsy. Investigation is in progress.”

The management of the general hospital at Badagry declined enquiries when approached by our correspondent.

A top official, who claimed not to be at the hospital, said only the Lagos State Government could give an accurate figure of casualties.

Copyright PUNCH.

All rights reserved. This material, and other digital content on this website, may not be reproduced, published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed in whole or in part without prior express written permission from PUNCH.