

# Three killed, pastor hospitalised as explosion rocks Lagos communities



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- NNPC shuts system 2B pipeline, allays fuel scarcity fear

Three people were killed and a badly burnt pastor of a white garment church hospitalised following a pipeline explosion which occurred at the Glory Land Estate, Isheri/LASU Igando Road, yesterday.

It was a gory scene at the neighbourhood of Diamond Estate/Idowu Egba Estate, Isheri, Igando.

For hours, waves of panic among residents were high and parents ran to pick up their children and wards from schools around the areas, as others fled from the community.

One of the residents, Bimbo Oke, said that the explosion was caused by the pastor, who took one of his members to the area for a prayer of deliverance. According to Oke, residents some weeks back had noticed leakage at the pipeline axis.

The pastor was alleged to have lit a candle during the deliverance session, igniting the explosion.

Oke said: "When the pastor was heading to that area with his member for prayers, he was warned and told about the leakage. He however, ignored the warnings. It was in the course of the deliverance that he lit a candle and caused an explosion. The pastor was rushed to the hospital while the member of the church was burnt beyond recognition. Fire fighters got to the scene an hour after the explosion."

Another resident, Mr Ayo Adedeji said: "We heard a loud noise at about 7:am, we rushed out of our houses and saw a huge fire. It must have been caused by oil spillages. We saw a body inside the river, but we believe the bodies are more. One person was rescued, but his condition was bad. I don't think he'll survive. This incident has become a recurring one and we are pleading with the government to come and do something about it. It's like we don't have a government."

Kayode Ajishafe, another member of the community, said: "The explosion was caused by vandals. The fire started as early as 6:30am. We noticed the flame and later discovered that it was a pipeline explosion. This is not the first time this is happening. It is always caused by vandals. Local vigilante people made us to understand that they sighted vandals some weeks ago and even alerted the police. The fire spread from Idowu-Egba road to Baruwa, Ipaja and Ayobo areas. Other places are Isheri Kpako area inside Peace Estate. Three people died. One of them was a lady, who went for spiritual deliverance with a pastor from a white garment church. The church is actually closed to the pipeline areas. A bridge, which links Idowu-Egba and Ayobo communities, was gutted. Fire fighters couldn't access the scene of the fire because the damaged bridge."

Mr. Atobatele said: " I was in the bathroom when I heard the explosion. I ran out. The fire was much. When we rushed to the scene, we saw a burning pastor, screaming for help, but nobody made any move to help him. Two men and I rushed over and assisted him. We rushed him to Alimosho General Hospital. I wonder while these pipeline explosions keep recurring. At the other side, we

saw three dead bodies. We really don't know the cause of this present explosion."

The Director-General, LASEMA, Dr. Femi Oke-Osanyintolu, said: "There is an outbreak of fire at the back of Diamond Estate along Isheri/Lasu -Igando Road. I suspect that the fire must have been caused by pipeline vandalism. I have activated the Lagos State Response Plan. All key Stakeholders have moved to the scene."

Oke-Osanyintolu said that one male adult was burnt to death. His words: "Upon arrival of the LRT as well as other emergency responders at the incident scene, it was observed that pipelines located within Diamond Estate/Idowu Egba were ruptured and spilling petrol which resulted to a fire outbreak in four points. One adult male was burnt to death. Rescue and recovery operations ongoing."

The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), yesterday, shut down all important System 2B fuel pipelines linking Atlas Cove Mega Jetty in Lagos with Mosimi Depot in Ogun State over an explosion and fire outbreak.

The Corporation, which also reported an oil pipeline fire outbreak on the pipeline in Baruwa Swamp area of Lagos, allayed fear that the incident could lead to scarcity of the Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), also known as petrol during the Yuletide and beyond.

A preliminary report of the incident, the NNPC said in a statement, "indicated that the pipeline might have been torched by act of vandalism of suspected oil thieves who had hacked into the line to intercept flow of petrol."

The corporation, in conjunction with the Lagos State Fire Service, the statement issued by Acting Group General Manager, Group Public Affairs division, Samson Makoji, read, "had deployed various categories of personnel to the scene to bring the fire under control.

"NNPC assured the general public that the pipeline will be put back into operation shortly, while the breach has no impact on petroleum products supply in the area."

Allaying fear of product's scarcity, the corporation also said that it has 116million litres of PMS in Mosimi Depot, 7.5million litres in Satellite Depot and 35million litres in Ibadan depots, all within System 2B network.

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