

2 Feared Dead in Ship Explosion

About two people were feared dead and several others injured in an explosion that emanated from a tanker vessel identified as MT Britania-U which berthed at the Marina area of Lagos yesterday.

The explosion also destroyed about seven vehicles which were parked at the parking lot of a bank, opposite the Marina Jetty.

After the explosion, fears were still rife that more harm could be done with the emission of gases from the vessel's several cylinders.

However, the presence of men of the Lagos State Fire Service, who stormed the scene to put off the fire put those fears to rest.

According to an eyewitness, who simply identified herself as Ogoma, at the deafening explosion, everybody had scampered for safety.

She said: "The explosion occurred at about 4 p.m. yesterday when people were preparing to round off the day's activity.

Suddenly, what we heard was a very loud explosion. My first thought was that Boko Haram has finally infiltrated Lagos."

By Chiemelie Ezeobi

She noted that after the tremor had subsided, they quickly rushed outside to see thick smoke emanating from the body of water at the Leventis Bus Stop, Marina.

Ogoma said that beneath the smoke was the cause of the explosion, an ashore vessel that was at that moment in flames.

While chaos reigned in the area, the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) rushed to the scene and carried several persons that were injured to the hospital.

Although some of the officials said everybody on board the vessel had been evacuated, there were still fears that some people could be trapped.

As at press time, the cause of the explosion was yet to be ascertained, although eyewitness accounts blamed the explosion on the flames of a welder who was working on the vessel.

THISDAY gathered that the welder and a yet-to-be identified lady were badly burnt by the fire and had since been taken to an undisclosed hospital.

All efforts to talk to the Lagos State Police Command Spokesman, Mr. Samuel Jinadu, proved abortive as he did not pick any of the several calls put across to him.

Unemployment

Unemployment rate in Nigeria has continued to rise, as the official figures are currently put at 23.9 per cent, up from 19.7 per cent in 2009, a trend which remains worrisome to the fight against poverty in Nigeria.

This figure, reportedly sourced from the National Bureau of Statistics, was disclosed in an address by the Secretary-General of the National Union of Textile, Garment and Tailoring Workers of Nigeria (NUTGTWN), Comrade Issa Aremu on the occasion of African Industrialisation day marked in Abuja yesterday.

Aremu said these figures were embarrassing for a country with vast human and material resources, adding that the poverty level remains high with over 70 per cent of Nigerians living below the poverty line.

He called for a total re-industri-