

Two Persons Feared Dead, Shops Burnt as Petrol Tanker Explodes in Onitsha

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David-Chyddu Eleke in Awka

A tanker loaded with petroleum product wednesday exploded at Upper Iweka, Onitsha in Anambra State, killing a woman and her baby, while also burning down several shops.

Source at Upper Iweka, the site of the incident, said the truck lost control and rammed into the wall of the popular Toronto Hospital at Upper-Iweka before exploding.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, SP Haruna Mohammed, confirmed the incident, saying as at the time of filling this report, only the unidentified woman and her baby have been lost to the fire.

He said: "Today (yesterday) at about 12:59 p.m., a tanker loaded with petroleum product lost control at Upper Iweka on Enugu-Onitsha expressway in Onitsha and crashed inside a pavement.

"Its product spilled over through the gutter and affected many shops and houses.

“The state Commissioner of Police, John B. Abang, visited the scene for an on-the-spot assessment, and appealed to the residents to remain calm. Fire Service department was equally contacted.

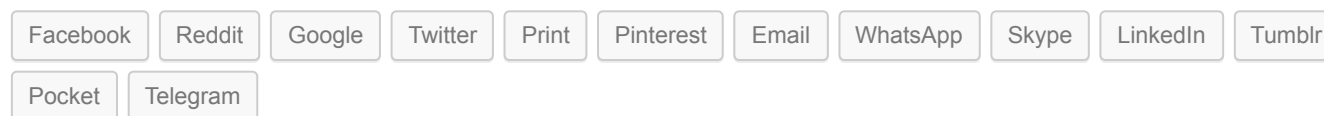
“Meanwhile, a yet-to-be-identified woman and her baby, who were caught up by the inferno and burnt beyond recognition, were rushed to Toronto hospital but certified dead by a medical doctor while receiving treatment.”

Haruna said police patrol teams have cordoned off the area to prevent hoodlums from taking advantage to loot, while effort was still ongoing to put out the fire.

An eye witness, Mrs. Angela Obi, who narrated the incident to THISDAY, said: “I still can’t believe that only two people died from that incident. Onitsha was something else today (yesterday), and it was almost as if the world was coming to an end.

“People were running helter-skelter, and some of us thought that more than 50 persons had already died,” she said.

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