

Another petroleum pipeline explosion rocks Lagos

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LAGOS was yesterday rocked by another petroleum products pipeline explosion caused by vandals at Ije Ododo in Lagos. The vandals had tampered with the pipeline supplying petrol from Atlas Cove jetty to Ejigbo depot.

Although some eyewitness claimed two persons lost their lives in the explosion *Vanguard* could not confirm this at press time because the team of fire fighters on location could not access the area. Because of the challenge posed by the terrain, the fire fighters had to construct a make shift bridge to gain access there.

When contacted, Mr. Felix Ugwu, the Public Affairs Manager of the Pipeline Products Marketing Company (PPMC), a subsidiary of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) confirmed the incident, pointing out that fire men had been trying to put it out.

"Our people are already fighting the fire and we do not know when the fire will be put off. During this period, we anticipate high rate of vandalism because of youths looking for money to celebrate the Christmas," he said.

Mr. Ugwu said management had been in touch with the Inspector- General of police who gave an assurance assurance that no officer attached to the Mobil Police Unit would be allowed to stay in a place for more than three months.

"This, he noted, is aimed at ensuring that they are not corrupted. You know when these officers stay in one place for too long, there is the tendency for them to become compromised," he said.

He also said the Inspector- General of Police had decided to raise a team of police lawyers to ensure speedy trial of those caught in acts of vandalism, adding that the inability of government to secure a conviction against culprits had only served to embolden others.

Fuel supply from the Atlas Cove jetty to the Ejigbo depot has since been suspended, while the company ascertains the extent of the damage.

Barely three months ago, Ilado village, a Lagos suburb was rocked by a petroleum pipeline explosion and fire incident which left over two hundred people dead, score wounded and a yet- to- be quantified amount of petroleum products stolen.

Meanwhile, residents of Igbo-Elejo, a community along Lagos coastal waters, have cried out to government to help curb the menace of oil pipeline vandals in the community.

According to a leader in the area, the activities of vandals if allowed to continue would endanger the lives of residents of the community as well as putting the community in the spotlight of oil pipeline vandalisation.