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By Evelyn Usman & Olasunkanmi Akoni

Posted to the Web: Thursday, October 04, 2007

LAGOS — TWELVE persons lost their lives in Tuesday night's petrol tanker explosion which rocked the entire Western Avenue area of Lagos State. This is just as doctors are reportedly still battling to save the lives of some of the victims who were severely burnt in an undisclosed hospital.

The accident has prompted the state security agents to effect immediate arrest of oil tankers that are not road worthy as well as those which contravene the state traffic rules.

Although the police put the figures of those who lost their lives in the blast at nine but a fire service official who claimed to be at the scene said it was difficult to give an exact number of casualties as some of the victims were burnt to the bones.

The official who pleaded anonymity said the number given by the police were those whose charred remains were complete. He added that the deceased identities could not be ascertained as their vehicles particulars and other relevant documents such as identity cards were all burnt to ashes.

The incident, according to the Police, occurred when a 30 litre tanker which was fully loaded with petrol product suddenly skidded off the road while descending the bridge opposite national stadium, along Funsho Williams Avenue (Western Avenue).

The tanker was said to have thereafter somersaulted before exploding, catching other road users unawares. Effort by the victims to escape prove abortive as fire reportedly caught up with some of them while trying to escape. Eye witness said it took a while before the state fire service arrived the scene and eventually put out the raging fire which also gutted several vehicles.

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