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...As fuel explosion claims one, razes depot

[Metro](#) Mar 11, 2011

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By Daniel Alfred

Thursday of March 3, an illegal petroleum depot, situated directly behind the Integrated depot at Coconut area of Apapa Express way in Lagos, was razed by fire. It also claimed the life of an identified man who was suspected to be one of the attendants there and left many other hospitalised. Also burnt were two cars and two motorcycles.



•Charred remains of motorcycles at the scene of the explosion.

The cause of the fire which started at about 2pm that same day was traced to illegal storage of petroleum products in drums and gallons. The products are usually sold to blackmarket retailers who in turn sell to cars and trucks. It was confirmed that the fire started following the overheating of the stored petroleum products.

When Vanguard Metro got to the scene of the incident, state fire fighters were busy battling to put out the fire. They were assisted by officials of a private fire agency from the integrated oil and gas depot who came to the rescue of individuals and succeeded in salvaging properties before they were destroyed by the raging fire.

But for the sympathizers who were wailing and lamenting the death of the attendant and others who escaped the explosion but had visible burns to show for their near-death experience, it was difficult to gauge the extent of the damage.

According to an eye witness, the affected persons sell petroleum products like kerosene, petrol, and diesel which he claimed the operators buy from tanker drivers. The drivers allegedly load full trucks at the depots and sell at 25 litres instead of 33 litres given to them in order to make their own gain.

But due to lack of storage facilities to store the products, they engage in the illegal business of storing these products in gallons and drums and then bury them in the ground.

The eye witness who also informed that the explosion was as a result of overheating from the stored fuels, noted that when petroleum products are stored in a gallon for too long, they cause temperature rise and if nothing is done, it results to an explosion.

He further noted that before the explosion, he saw one of them smoking under the shade where the fuels were stored but doesn't believe that was the reason for the fire incident. However, many are still left baffled by the fact that such operations will be going on right behind a major depot and nothing is done about it.

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