

[PRIVACY POLICY](#)

Vanguard

[HOME](#)[NEWS](#)[SPORTS](#)[POLITICS](#)[BUSINESS](#)[TECH](#)[ENTERTAINMENT](#)[ALLURE](#)[VIDEOS](#)[EDITORIAL](#)[VIEWPOINT](#)[FORUM](#)[JOBS](#)[COLUMNS](#)[RELATIONSHIPS](#)

Breaking News

[TRANSLATE](#)

5 killed as pipeline fire razes homes, vehicles in Lagos

ON JANUARY 21, 2020 9:18 AM / IN [ENERGY](#) /

Kindly Share This Story:

Security agencies, communities are accomplices — NNPC

Some sympathizers ponder burnt residential buildings at the scene of the pipeline fire at Ile Epo, Ekororo Road in Abule Egba area of Lagos State.

By Udeme Akpan, Sebastine Obasi, Olasunkanmi Akoni, Bose Adelaja, Ediri Ejoh, Esther Onyegbula, Prince Okafor & Joseph Oso

Tragedy struck late Sunday night when yet to be identified underaged girl, her mother and three men were burnt to death following raging fire from a vandalised petroleum pipeline of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC, at Ile-Epo, Ekororo, Abule -Egba, Oke Odo Local Government Area, inward Baruwa, Alimosho area of Lagos State. About 150 residents were displaced, as 39 vehicles and 30 buildings were affected by the inferno.

However, the bodies of the deceased were recovered from the inferno by men of the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency, LASEMA, in collaboration with other response teams. Preliminary investigation by Vanguard revealed that the inferno was as a result of pipeline vandals who busted one of the oil pipelines in the area to siphon the petrol when the fire occurred, leading to the destruction of 11 trucks, laden with 40feet containers.

According to an eyewitness, the vandalized pipeline had been gushing petroleum product earlier in the noon before it later exploded into inferno much later. Director-General, LASEMA, who confirmed the incident, added that the swift response of LASEMA and other First Responders mobilized to the incident site made it possible to put out the fire quickly and successfully, thereby, curtailing it from spreading to other adjoining buildings.

“The quick success aside being attributed to adequate training of personnel, quick response time and acquisition of proper equipment by the Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu led administration, was also due to the outcome of inter-agency collaboration which made the operation and recovery process fast and smooth,” Oke-Osanyintolu stated.

He continued: “As at the moment, 8 am, (Monday), we can confirm that after several hours of intense fire fighting by the combined teams of Lagos Fire and

other agencies, the inferno has been completely put out with details revealing that the valve where the vandalised petroleum products emanated from had been stopped cutting off supply totally from source at the NNPC Station. “We received distress call by 8.30 pm and by 9 pm we have curtailed it and by 11.30 pm we have put it out. Having contained the area at 11.30 pm, we have commenced an enumeration of the vehicles and properties that were involved this morning.

“We, therefore, appeal to all residents to remain calm and to report suspicious activities to curtail the instances of these unfortunate incidents. In line with Mr Governor’s greater Lagos agenda, the government will do its part, while the citizens need to do their own part. “This collaborative by the NNPC eased the entire recovery process in no small measure, as the supply of the highly inflammable fluid was cut off at source which contributed immensely to curtailing the resultant fire from acts of the pipeline vandals,” LASEMA boss stated.

Victims count losses

When Vanguard visited affected sites on Monday, at Joel Nnadede Street, off Igoke Estate, Oke Odo, Local Government Area, residents were seen in their large numbers lamenting the losses and mourning the dead. One of the affected victims whose building was destroyed, Miss Taiwo Odugbesan, narrated her ordeal thus, “Yesterday, (Sunday) January 19th, 2020., after returning from Church service around 5 pm, and when I was just settling down,

“I started hearing loud voices outside shouting and cautioning residents not to turn on a gas cooker or any form of naked light. I was wondering what could be wrong. At that point, I rushed out to see what’s going on. That was the end I saw of my property intact. The next thing that happened was fire everywhere. I could not salvage anything from the house.

“I’m an orphan, no husband. I fend alone for myself. The only property my parents left for me all gone in the inferno. I don’t have anything again but I know I

have God. Everything I have worked for in my life all gone. My brother's landed property document all burnt. The government should please assist us. This building is far from the pipeline axis.

"We have been complaining to the authorities about the illegal activities of vandals who come to burst pipelines and scoop fuel. Surprisingly, the authorities have refused to take positive action. Maybe, now that the worst has happened again the government will come to our aid and address the issue permanently. The government should come to our aid because I'm finished."

Also, a victim who simply identified himself as Prince John narrated thus, "I'm the Community Development Association, CDA, Chairman of the area. I got a call yesterday at about 7.pm because I was not in the house that the pipeline has been bursted again. This has been happening since 2006 in Abule Egba.

"We have written a series of petitions to the management of NNPC in Abuja, Mosimi, Ogun State and Ejigbo, Lagos, all to no avail. "We petitioned the then Governor Akinwunmi Ambode, Commandant state Civil Defence but no concrete response.

"Even there was a time we called for the deployment of security personnel. The state Commandant Civil Defence approved the deployment of 24 soldiers to monitor the NNPC pipeline.

"Surprisingly, the latest tragedy went beyond us. I was rushing down to the house to ensure the safety of my family. But unfortunately, before I got to the house it has already been consumed by fire. I thank God, through His grace my wife had already evacuated my children to a safe place if not they would have been consumed as well.

"There is a canal that flows through the frontage of my house. The fire spread through the canal which was flowing with fuel spillage.

“Now, all my valuables, documents, certificates all gone. I’m using this medium to appeal to relevant authorities, governments to come to our rescue as we have lost our life’s savings in the avoidable tragedy. We are appealing to governments to have compassion on us.”

Also recounting his experience to *Vanguard*, one of the victims who were occupants of a room and parlour apartment of a bungalow building at No 4, Ahmed Sodiq Street said at about 8.30 pm, his wife went to a neighbouring street for debt collection, their 13 and six years old sons were in their apartment while the father was resting within the premises.

However, at about 9 pm, an unusual sound and smoke rent the air and all he could do was to rush inside and picked his sons while their mother met them at the entrance of the building and all ran for safety. He said, “As at that time, so many people were scampering for safety and we joined them. We thereafter trekked about 30 metres before realising what was happening,” He said his family had to pass the night with a relative and by the time they returned home the following day, the entire building had been razed. “My wife lost N80, 000 cash to the inferno and if we are to estimate our property, it is worth N2.5m. The cloth I am wearing was donated by a sympathiser,”

A survivor, Isiyemi Abimbola who spoke with our reporter at the scene said the incident was avoidable if the government had done the needful. She said, “I perceived the smell of petroleum and sensed danger, so I joined other residents to run for safety.

Fortunately, my house was not affected but my neighbours’ buildings were razed. Some lives and properties were lost and this wouldn’t have occurred if the government had done the needful. “This is not the first time such a thing will happen in Abule-Egba and its environs, one of my neighbours died searching for her child. A similar incident occurred last year; we need functional fire services for emergencies such as this,” “When the firefighters came initially, they said there

was no water, their response was very slow, and they came more than an hour after the incident.

READ ALSO: Ijegan explosion: We'll demolish illegal structures along pipelines — LASG

Security agencies, host communities are accomplices, says GMD, NNPC

THE Group Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC, Mele Kyari stated that NNPC is working with security agencies to arrest bad eggs, suspected to be behind frequent pipeline vandalism and fuel theft in the host communities.

Kyari stated this when he visited the site of the pipeline explosion that killed five people and injured several others at Ile Epo Ekor Road, Abule Egba in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos. He said: "We are working now with all the security agencies including the NNPC to take out the bad elements in our midst. We agree completely that there are compromised people within the NNPC, within the security agencies, within the communities and everyone that is involved in this.

"And what we have done in the last two to three months is to work with these agencies and the NNPC to make sure that we take the bad elements out of us, that we resolve the issues and delete them if we have to do so, and that is what going to happen.

"We are working with the security agencies to make sure that we reduce this to the barest minimum. We are working with particularly the Nigerian Navy, the Civil Defence Corps, the Nigerian Police and all other agencies of security, including the Department of State Service (DSS) to contain this to the barest minimum.

Fire outbreak at the scene of pipeline vandalism

“More importantly what is happening around this pipeline from Atlas Cove into Mosimi, and all the way to Ilorin are acts of vandals of all nature along our right of ways. What they do is that they make insertion into our lines, tap petroleum products and it ends in the disasters we have seen like this. This is happening daily.” The NNPC boss also explained that it behoves on host communities of oil pipelines to always report the activities of vandals to the appropriate authorities to save themselves from the inherent danger. “For the communities who harbour this, the warning is that this will constitute dangers to all of us.

But to those who are particularly involved in siphoning petroleum products or laying pipes into their homes, the Lagos State Governor including the Ogun State Government have agreed that we take out these houses.

Whoever owns it, whatever they do, once we establish that your property is involved in this, we take it out, and we are already doing that. So far, the Nigerian Navy has taken out over 300 houses along the right of way and we will continue to do this; and by the time we are done with this sanity will come to this line, and we assure Nigerians that this will be the safety for all of us, particularly the communities that live around our assets.”

Kyari noted that the Abule Egba pipeline area was not secured, which may have led to the fire explosion. “It is not secure, as you can see, the point where this fire started is to the visibility of everybody around here, and that means that we saw it and didn’t do anything, and this is the result we are seeing.

We are hoping and counting on Nigerians to help us resolve this because this is a major national security concern. We are very happy also that we have restored the line after the break. We shut down the line to contain the damage that it could cause and now we are streaming. Petroleum products are flowing all the way from Atlas cove to Ilorin as we speak now. But what is important is to sustain this and sustaining it means that everybody must help us and cooperate with us,” He added.

NNPC records 45,347 pipeline breaks in 18 yrs

THE Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has laid out steps to mitigate the raging twin menace of pipeline vandalism and crude oil theft in the nation’s oil and gas industry.

Speaking in Abuja at the inaugural Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) Policy Dialogue, the Group Managing Director of the NNPC, Mallam Mele Kyari, said oil theft had remained a challenge in the Industry despite

some strong interventions in the past. Kyari said that the gradual reduction in incidences would be sustained through improved collaboration, implementation of Global Memoranda of Understanding (GMOUs), and deployment of appropriate technologies, among other measures, a release by NNPC Group General Manager, Group Public Affairs, Mr Samson Makoji has said. Kyari who was represented at the event by the NNPC Chief Operating Officer, Upstream, Mr Roland Ewubare, listed other measures to curb the menace to include: a security architecture with single accountability for national critical infrastructure; Industry and regulatory commitment to transparent crude oil and products accounting; realistic expectation by host communities; and emplacement of sustainable social investment mechanism.

He emphasized the need to inculcate shared values of integrity and transparency across every level of the governance structure for pipeline security, policy refill and enforcement of legal actions on economic saboteurs.

The NNPC GMD harped on the need to prioritize and instil in the nation's teeming youth a sense of patriotism and national orientation. On the immediate and remote causes of oil theft and pipeline vandalism, the GMD posited that most stakeholders were of the view that oil theft was essentially a social problem which underlying causes include: poverty in the communities, community-Industry expectation mismatch and corruption. Others, he noted included: ineffective law enforcement, poor governance, poor prosecution of offenders, high unemployment in the communities, thriving illegal oil market involving both Nigerians and foreigners, and inadequate funding of resources to combat oil theft.

He lamented that NNPC, as an operator, had suffered severe attacks on its facilities and assets, noting that between 2001 to half-year 2019, NNPC had recorded a total of 45,347 pipeline breaks on its downstream pipeline network across the country. Kyari said that for the Nigerian economy to prosper, NNPC and other oil companies must be able to operate efficiently and profitably.

“Unfortunately, the combination of crude oil theft, illegal refining and pipeline vandalism, has become a major threat to Nigeria in meeting its revenue projections in recent time,” he said. Also in his presentation, Edo State Governor and Chairman of the National Economic Council (NEC) Ad Hoc Committee on Crude Oil Theft, Prevention and Control, Mr Godwin Obaseki, stressed the need to institute a proper governance structure for pipeline security in the Industry.

Governor Obaseki called on the Nigeria Intelligence Agency (NIA) to work with the NNPC in identifying possible international markets and destinations of stolen Nigerian crude oil. He said that the Industry must end the prevailing incentives that make it possible for crude oil theft and pipeline vandalism to flourish.

The governor stated that NEC had upgraded the Ad Hoc Committee on Crude Theft to a standing committee with a mandate to provide regular updates to NEC as may be required. Earlier in his welcome address, the Executive Secretary of NEITI, Mr Waziri Adio, provided gory statistics on the situation, even as he challenged participants at the policy dialogue to come up with practical solutions.

Vanguard

Kindly Share This Story:

All rights reserved. This material and any other digital content on this platform may not be reproduced, published, broadcast, written or distributed in full or in part, without written permission from **VANGUARD NEWS**.

Download Vanguard News App. Technical Feedback: whatsapp 08023469027
READ our Privacy-policy and cookie policy.

NWAFOR

[View all posts by Nwafor →](#)

PREVIOUS POST

Trump rejects impeachment charges as an affront to U.S. Constitution

NEXT POST

Joaquin Phoenix idolizes Heath Ledger as he wins at SAG Awards



**This site
can't be**

Disclaimer

Comments expressed here do not reflect the opinions of vanguard newspapers or any employee thereof.

LATEST NEWS

2:28 PM **UZODINMA VS IHEDIOHA: REACTIONS CONTINUE TO SPRING UP IN IMO**

2:26 PM **NAVY ARREST 9 SUSPECTED KIDNAPPERS, RESCUE 28 VICTIMS**

2:15 PM **2023: YOU CAN'T WIN LAGOS, APC CHIEFTAIN TELLS PDP**

2:11 PM **LUIS SUAREZ LABELS LIVERPOOL FANS 'THE BEST' IN THE WORLD**