

Power outages conakry

CONAKRY, Guinea (AP) -- Residents in Guinea's capital on Tuesday woke up to rising costs of transportation after authorities closed gas stations as a major explosion and ensuing fire left several dead, hundreds injured and could now disrupt the supply of gas across the West African nation.

At least 18 people were killed, more than 200 injured and hundreds displaced by Monday's blaze that followed an explosion at the country's main fuel depot in the capital, Conakry, ripping through structures mostly in the Coronthie area that is home to some of the country's poorest households.

Four more deaths were confirmed on Tuesday, bringing the total death toll to 18, while 85 of the 212 injured people were still receiving treatment in hospitals, government spokesperson Ousmane Gaoual Diallo said on state television, adding that the fire affected 738 households.

The fire was contained nearly 24 hours after it started and other countries, including Senegal and Mali, sent teams to assist as authorities investigate the cause of the explosion.

Guinea relies on imported petroleum products, most of which are distributed from the destroyed depot, leading to fears of panic buying of the commodity. Authorities have closed most public places and halted operations of all gas stations and tankers while temporary shelters were provided for hundreds of people.

"A good part of my small savings has gone into transport," she said.

Although the government alerted residents that "the electricity supply may potentially be affected by outages," homes and facilities were still powered as the national power distribution company was still running on its fuel stock.

Across the capital, many residents offered to help in various ways: Some offered relief items for those displaced while others volunteered their vehicles to help transport valuables or offered accommodation to the displaced.

However, the gas shortages were already impacting the public transport system, which is heavily relied upon in the country.

"I wanted to go to Kaloum to see the state of my shop ... but the taxi who used to charge me 10,000 Guinean francs (\$1.17) to reach Kaloum told me to pay 50,000 Guinean francs (\$5.87)," said Nouhan Tour?, a 45-year-old trader.

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CONAKRY - An explosion at an oil terminal in Guinea's capital Conakry, which killed 14 people and injured 190, could lead to electricity outages as the majority of the terminal's fuel tanks are out of service, the government said late on Monday.

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