

# 12 die in Rivers oil explosion

## ● As NUPRC probes incident

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**T**he Rivers State police command yesterday confirmed that 12 people died in an oil pipeline explosion at the Rumurkpe community in Emuoha Local Government Area of Rivers State.

The police public relations officer in the state, SP Grace Iringe Koko, said preliminary investigation by the command indicated that the victims were scooping crude product when the site caught fire.

She said about 12 persons were burnt to death saying the identities of the victims are still unknown.

She said five vehicles,

four tricycles (Keke NAPEP) and one motorcycle were all burnt to ashes.

An eyewitness, Fyeneface Dumeneme Fyeneface, who is the executive director, Advocate Centre For Good Environment, had informed our reporter that the incident occurred at a crude oil tapping point belonging to a multi-oil company left many people dead.

Fyeneface said the explosion happened at 2.00am on Friday when one of the buses that was loaded with crude oil collided with another vehicle leading to the explosion.

He said the explosion left dozens, including women dead and burnt beyond recognition, with many other vehicles and tricycles burnt

at the tapping point said to be on the Trans Niger Delta Pipeline (TNP) that passed through the community.

The report further stated that all those who were at the exact tapping point in the "pit" got killed while some of those who had loaded the crude and waiting to load, including women, have been killed by the explosion.

Meanwhile, the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) yesterday said it had launched an investigation into a reported explosion leading to a major fire incident near a pipeline in Rumuekpe community in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State on Thursday night.

In a statement by the

NUPRC, the commission's chief executive, Gbenga Komolafe, an engineer, said the commission, in line with its statutory regulatory oversight of upstream petroleum operations in the Nigerian oil and gas industry has commenced investigations into the incident in conjunction with relevant stakeholders and will provide updates appropriately.

The NUPRC noted that although there were speculations about the level of casualties, the commission cannot confirm any until after our investigations.

"However, we will take necessary measures to ensure that all safety and environmental measures in line with global best practices to safeguard lives and the environment are put in place," it added.