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100 pipeline vandals feared dead in Arepo, Ogun State fire

By Oditia Sunday on July 23, 2015

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NOT less than 100 suspected petroleum pipeline vandals were yesterday roasted to death along Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) pipeline at Arepo area in Ogun State.

Accounts say, the vandals were busy scooping fuel gushing from damaged pipelines when the fire suddenly started.

As at 2.30 p.m. when The Guardian visited the area, the fire was still raging.

The area, hitherto guarded by members of Odua People's Congress (OPC) was said to have been left unprotected following the withdrawal of the OPC members by its leadership over non-payment of their contract fee by the Federal Government.



Vandalised pipeline

When The Guardian visited the scene, some of the vandals who survived the fire outbreak were seen battling to put out the raging fire while others were taking away the bodies of their colleagues burnt beyond recognition in canoes.

The NNPC management had called in policemen attached to the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Solomon Arase's Special Task Force on Anti-Pipeline Vandalism.

One of the policemen, who spoke with The Guardian said that they were making plans to create an access to the area, which has been overgrown with weeds and water hyacinth.

Policemen could not get access to the swampy areas where the vandals were evacuating the bodies.

"You can see that there is no tent in this area. The one that was here was set ablaze by vandals who attacked members of the OPC. We were however invited by NNPC to come and secure the area while repairs will be done on the security post.

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"More than 100 vandals were roasted in this fire outbreak.

As you can see, we do not have a tent, no pathway to the scene of the incident. The best option is for helicopters to be used to access the area or better still, construct a road to the site," the policeman who sought anonymity said.

Confirming the incident, the newly posted officer in charge of the task force, Valentine Olumese, a Chief Superintendent of Police (CSP) who was also at the scene, said police have completed plans to take over the security and protection of the area.

"The tent that was destroyed will be repaired and access to the scene will be created. Our men will maintain presence."

He also assured that pipeline vandalism would be reduced to the barest minimum if police presence returns to the area.

Ogun State Police Spokesman, Muiwa Adejobi, however, declined to speak on the issue.

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