

Over 20 feared dead in pipeline explosion in Rivers

By Kelvin Ebiri, Port
Harcourt

23 June 2019 | 4:17 am



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As Wike Issues Ultimatum On Belemaoil

An oil pipeline explosion has claimed over twenty lives at Komkom community in Oyigbo Local Government Area of Rivers State.



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Meanwhile, Governor, Nyesom Wike has issued a 7-day ultimatum for the resolution of the dispute relating to Oil Mining License (OML) 25 for the reopening the closed oil facility.

A deafening explosion rocked Komkom community in the early hours of yesterday, leaving over twenty dead and a raging inferno that lasted several hours. The actual cause of the explosion had not been determined at press time yesterday.

Oyigbo Local Government Area chairman, Gerald Oforji, told The Guardian that he was briefed that officials of the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation and Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) had visited the location on Friday, following the discovery of a faulty valve along the pipeline.

He explained that it was anticipated that both the NNPC and Shell would have returned yesterday to continue the maintenance work, but before their arrival, an explosion occurred causing massive fuel leakage that attracted locals.

"They said it was valve problem. I would not want to accuse anybody that they broke pipe because I didn't see anybody.

I have to say what I know. They said it is a valve problem, they said NNPC/ Shell people came yesterday (Friday), thinking that they will be coming today (Saturday) to seal it.



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56 mins ago

Before they could come, maybe the pressure got overwhelmed and exploded and the product started dripping” he said.

Oforji stated that as soon as people realised there was petroleum products leaking from the pipeline, they rushed to the scene in mass to scoop fuel and in the process, fire was ignited claiming over twenty lives.

Governor Wike during a meeting with the management of the SPDC, Belemaoil Limited, Kula community leaders and security agencies at the Government House Port Harcourt, yesterday, called for a resolution of the shutdown Shell oil facility.

Wike said he called the meeting because the closure of OML 25 is negatively affecting Federal, State and Local Government funds.

