

Metronotes

Pipeline Explosion Kills 20, Injure Many In Rivers

From Ann Godwin and
Obinna Nwaoku, Port Harcourt

AGAIN, pipeline explosion from illegal refining of petroleum products in Rumuekpe community in Emohua local council of Rivers State has reportedly killed 20 persons.

This is even as two persons have died while several others sustained serious injuries in a ghastly motor accident that occurred in the early hours of yesterday at the Rumuji axis of East-West road in Emohua local council of the state.

Two Die At Police Roadblock

Last month, some persons were also reportedly killed following activities of illegal bunkering in Rivers State.

It was learnt that the latest incident occurred last Thursday when youths of the community were siphoning petroleum products from several pipelines located on the stretch of the adjoining villages.

A resident of the community, Mike Ndele, said the area was prone to oil bunkering activities, disclosing that the pipeline exploded when the

bunkerers attempted to cut off one of the pipeline heads. He said that about 20 persons died in the incident.

He said: "I can confirm to you that more than 20 persons died in that very incident. The particular place where this incident occurred is very notorious for bunkering activities. Youths from various communities gathered there to carry out criminal activities of cutting oil pipes. The place is the centre of oil bunkering activities. There are so many petrol and gas pipelines that crisscross the

community. Some multinational oil companies own the pipelines.

"NLNG also has their gas pipeline along the stretch of the community. Those involved in this criminal activity may have ruptured a petrol pipeline, which ignited fire and burnt to death so many persons. This incident may have affected many families from the neighbouring communities as many youths involved in this nefarious activity comes from different communities."