

Bodies Float On Okrika River

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Corpses are still floating on Okrika River more than a week after the inferno at the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) jetty in Okrika, Rivers State, claimed more than 40 lives.

On Sunday, three of such bodies were recovered from the river. Last week, about 20 bodies were recovered when they were found floating on the same river.

It was learnt that most of the bodies are yet to be found.

Reacting to the incident, chairman of Ijaw Mothers Council who is an indigene of Okrika, Doris McDaniels, expressed concern that peace has evaded the council.

She told journalists on Sunday that there has been wailing in all the communities of Okrika because every one recorded losses. "About 40 persons died in the fire outbreak at the jetty. Every community in Okrika recorded death from the sad incident. There is

wailing in the whole town.

"Government should try to put an end to these sad stories in the region. And this can be achieved by empowering the people," McDaniels said.

Meanwhile, the Rivers State Governor, Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi, has told the chairman of the state Advisory Board, Prof. Nimi Briggs, who was released by kidnappers on Saturday night to see his ordeal as a sacrifice to the growth of the state.

The governor said on Sunday when he visited Briggs at his University of Port Harcourt residence at Choba, near Port Harcourt that the people were apprehensive when he was abducted. He also thanked God for helping the people to bear his absence.

"See what happened to you as a sacrifice to the state, though it was quite painful to all of us,"

Amaechi said, noting that God had a reason for the incident as it would probably be the end of kidnapping cases in the state.

"I believe that if this is not the end of kidnapping, then we are getting to the end of kidnapping, because when we get the hostages released, we would go after the kidnappers," he stated.

The governor, however, expressed happiness that the Federal Government is beginning to take the issue of abduction seriously, and has promised to improve on the security situation in Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta states.

He advised those involved in the acts to repent and surrender their arms before the law catches up with them. Amaechi told Briggs that Rivers and indeed Nigerians felt his absence when he was abducted.

Responding, Briggs thanked the government for its support to his family while the unfortunate incident lasted, and commended the security operatives for securing his release.