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## Strike: 3 Feared Dead In NUPENG, Police Clash

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Ben Dunno, Warri  
December 4th, 2008

The Warri Zonal Council of National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) yesterday made good its threat to cripple the operations of Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL).

But the NUPENG strike, according to our correspondent turned bloody as the Union members were allegedly manhandled by security operatives.

Sources said that no fewer than three persons were feared dead in ensuing confrontation with security operatives just as scores more were reportedly injured and were immediately rushed to hospital for medical attention.

Our correspondent reports that as early as 7.00 am, tanker drivers numbering over 100 had blocked the ever busy NPA Expressways housing the oil firm, thereby temporarily halting vehicular movement on the road.

Combined team of Anti-crime mobile, regular policemen and soldiers who were drafted to beef up security at the company threw tear gas and used gun butts to beat members of the Union in a desperate bid to break up their rank.

Comrade Williams Akporeha, Chairman, NUPENG, Warri Zonal Council who was also beaten up by security operatives, said yesterday that, "We are here to tell Deltans and Nigerians of police and soldiers brutality on innocent Nigerians "

"NUPENG today as it is known in this country; is not a violent body; NUPENG is a peaceful body and we carry out our protest peacefully. Today, we are at Chevron's gate right now to protest CNL management grand design to flush out NUPENG members in the company's operations. As we stand here talking to you, about 122 workers are on the firing line because they decided to join NUPENG and management has said that they do not have the right to join NUPENG," he stated.

According to the NUPENG boss, as a free country, the 122 contract staff of Polmaz being threatened with sack by CNL had the right to join any Union of their choice.

"We came here peacefully today with over 100 trucks to barricade CNL's entrance and the major NPA Expressway to register our protest, but Chevron gave the security operatives shoot-at-sight order. A soldier told me that they were just having pity on us that the order that they received was to shoot us at sight," he claimed.

According to him also; "As you can see all over the whole place, you can see serious molestation of innocent workers who have come here to protest peacefully about their rights. This issue has been lingering on for the past three years. We have tried to engage Chevron in peaceful discussions without protest, but they have continued to hold on to their guns that these workers cannot join NUPENG."

Comrade Akporeha added that; "The action of the security operatives against us today is not the best, we were beaten up, they broke our heads with their guns and right now, I cannot hear with one of my ears again. We had injuries all over. About two of our drivers are at the hospital right now; in fact, they are on a danger list and it is being rumoured that three of our members lost their lives as they shot sporadically without having mercy on us."

He vowed that they would continue to carry out the protest; "Until Chevron allow the right of our members to be. Enough of enslavement of workers by Chevron, we will continue to resist this; even if they kill me today, I am sure that the struggle will still go on. We cannot continue to live as if we are in bondage in our own fatherland."

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