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Senator Orji, Ikpeazu visit oil explosion sites, as monarch blames NNPC

Posted By: [Our Reporter](#) On: October 19, 2018 In: [Southeast report](#)



The senator representing Abia central senatorial district, Senator Theodore Orji has visited the two communities devastated by oil pipeline explosions in Abia State.

So have the state governor Okezie Ikpeazu and his wife Nkechi.

The two communities are Umuimo and Umuaduru in Osisioma council area of the state.

Death toll of the explosions has risen to 150. Houses and economic crops were also destroyed in the resulting inferno.

The senator, who was briefed by the traditional ruler of the area, HRH Eze Ikechukwu Chiavoilaefu, said the explosion had a devastating effect on the affected communities.

Eze Chiavoilaefu said that over 150 people lost their lives, as 70 bodies were evacuated from Umuodara while 80 were taken to the mortuary by several ambulances from Umuimo, another site of the incident.

The traditional ruler blamed the incident on the inability of the staff of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) to respond to distress calls made to them when the people noticed leakages from their pipelines.

He said that when the people noticed the leakages they made every effort to get the management of the NNPC to come and repair the damaged pipelines.

“But to our chagrin they never showed up till the incident happened,” he said.

Speaking with newsmen after inspecting the sites and visiting the survivors of the pipeline explosion, Senator Orji regretted the inability of the management of NNPC to do the needful on the pipeline which led to the ugly incident.

Orji said, “If the management of NNPC had heeded the calls of the people from the area to come and repair the leaking pipeline, those who lost their lives and those who have been rendered homeless will not be in the situation they have found themselves

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now”.

The senator warned that what happened should be a lesson to people who are living along or near oil pipelines, saying that they should be vigilant at all times and warn those in authority to come and repair their pipelines when there are leakages.

Orji noted that there is hunger in the land which may have called for people to go for the easy money by trying to scoop petroleum products.

“There is hunger in the land and even if you post a battalion of soldiers there they will not stop the people from coming to scoop petroleum products from the leaking pipeline.”

He also blamed the security agents who were alleged by the people from the community to be collecting as much as N1000 from people to allow them to go and scoop the petroleum products from the leaking pipelines.

The former governor of the state promised to raise the issue at the floor of the senate so that the federal government will come to the aid of the victims and their families, “as many of them have lost their homes, economic crops and means of livelihood”.



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The senator later donated cash to some of the victims currently receiving treatment in various hospitals in Aba and Osisioma, while he also called for immediate supply of medics to the area to avoid outbreak of diseases.

Earlier, the council chairman of Osisioma council area, Iheyinna Mgbeahuru also blamed the NNPC for the disaster, saying that when the leakages were noticed, “We called the management of NNPC severally for a meeting which they never responded to till today”.

Mgbeahuru said that the oil pipeline leakages has affected their crops, farmlands and sources of water as all their boreholes have been affected to the extent that they have to buy water from outside their community to drink and do other domestic things.

He thanked the former governor for showing concern over the plight of members of his senatorial district, “You not only came personally, but made efforts to visit all the sites and those affected which shows that our people mean a lot to you”.

Governor Ikpeazu also came calling to see things for himself as he visited Umuaduru and Umuimo villages in Osisioma Ngwa Local Government Area after the pipeline explosion.

The governor directed the Commissioner for Petroleum Resources, Chizurum Kanu to immediately inaugurate a commission of inquiry to unravel the immediate and remote causes of the pipeline explosion that affected two communities and led to loss of lives.

He also directed the Commissioner for Health, Dr John Ahukannah and Chairman of Osisioma LGA, Mgbeahuru, to visit the surviving victims of the explosion at the various hospitals and ensure that government provided them with adequate medicare as well as pay their medical bills.

Ikpeazu who cried during the visit described the incident as disheartening and unfortunate and commiserated with the families of those who lost their lives as a result of the pipeline explosion and prayed God to give them the fortitude to bear the loss.

The next person to call on the pipeline explosion sites was the wife of the governor, Mrs Ikpeazu who also visited victims of the inferno at the Abia State University Teaching Hospital (ABSUTH) in Aba.

The wife of the governor shed tears while sympathising with the surviving victims at the teaching hospital

Mrs. Ikpeazu paid for the treatment of the victims at the hospital and took time to pray for them and she also used the opportunity to pay for the treatment of a 10-year-old boy whose body was burnt by a high tension cable.



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