

Pipeline explosion kills man in Rivers

**Soni Daniel,
Port Harcourt**

A middle-aged man was confirmed dead on Monday as a result of the injuries he sustained from an explosion fire that erupted in a vandalised oil pipeline in Ogale in Eleme Local Government Area of Rivers State.

The man, whose name was given as Obo Awala, met his untimely death in his attempt to scoop oil from the sprawling pipelines that take crude from the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation to other parts of the country through Eleme.

Eyewitnesses told our correspondent that the man had successfully scooped petrol from one of the damaged trucks and was about to leave the area when the explosion occurred and tore him to pieces.

The fire that caused the explosion was said to have been ignited when the deceased attempted to kick-start his motorcycle and leave the scene after scooping the quantity of petrol he needed.

The State Police Command confirmed the death

of Awala on Monday afternoon. The Police Public Relations Officer for the command, Mrs. Ireju Barasua, said that the police were investigating the cause of the fire and that the corpse had been removed to an unnamed morgue in the state.

Some of the natives of Ogale decried the continued vandalism of NNPC facility by elements in the community in search of means of living. One top government official from the area, who spoke to our correspondent on condition of anonymity, said the natives were tired of vandals and were not ready to desist from the act.

The killing of Awala came barely two months after five natives of the community, including a pregnant woman were drown in their bid to scoop oil from the same location.

Oil theft is a big business in many communities in the Niger Delta where oil pipelines crisscross the farmlands and homes of the natives. The resources are easily sold to buyers who pose as businessmen from manufacturing firms.