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Ijaw youths shut down Chevron flow station

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Ijaw youths on Sunday shut down Abiteye flow station in Delta State belonging to the American oil giant, Chevron Nigeria Limited.

The rampaging youths also vandalised the facility, which produces 42,000 barrels crude oil per day, before its closure at 6.30pm.

Employees of the CNL on the facility, located in Warri South-West Local Government Area, were maltreated and wounded during the incident.

Consequently, the CNL's management on Monday evacuated its employees and security agents from the scene.

It was gathered that the killing of one of the youths by the soldiers of the Joint Task Force in the Niger Delta, Operation Restore Hope, further angered the youths.

Some soldiers were also reportedly wounded in a counter-attack by the youths.

Our correspondent learnt that the youths overpowered the soldiers after futile attempt to resist them.

The youths were still occupying the flow station as at press time on Monday.

Findings by our correspondent revealed that the youths from Benikrukru community were protesting poor handling of the negotiation over an oil spill from the CNL's operation in the area by their leaders.

They said the paltry sum paid by the CNL's management was allegedly misappropriated by their leaders.

One of them said their representatives wrongly negotiated a bundle of fishing net at N1,500 with the CNL's management which was not acceptable to them.

The youths, who called our correspondent on the phone from the scene on Monday, demanded a fresh negotiation on the oil spill with new accredited representatives of the community.

One of them, who declined to reveal his identity, vowed that his kinsmen would not vacate the facility until the CNL acceded to their request.

He added that the CNL must pay commensurate compensation over the oil spill to guarantee its unhindered operation in their areas.

"The CNL cannot buy over and settle some community leaders and expect us to fold our hands. Enough of divide and rule, the CNL must pay us our entitlements on the spill for peace to reign," he said.

The security situation in the riverine areas of the state continued to defy solutions proffered by the Governor, Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan.

Uduaghan, in apparent response to the presidential order asking him to ensure quick restoration of sanity to the state to guarantee unhindered operations by the oil multinationals, set up Delta State Waterways Security Committee shortly after his inauguration.

However, Uduaghan's peace initiative suffered a set back following Friday's kidnap of some foreign nationals and Sunday's closure of the CNL's facility in the state.

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CNL'S General Manager, Government and Public Affairs, Mr. Femi Odumabo, confirmed the closure of the flow station by the youths.

"Some youths invaded and shut the place (Abiteye flow station). They maltreated our people and damaged some facilities," he said.

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