

9th December, 2013

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Suspected oil thief dies in pipeline fire

DECEMBER 9, 2013 BY SIMON UTEBOR

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A suspected unnamed oil thief was burnt to death on Saturday after a trunk line belonging to the Nigerian Agip Oil Company along Egbematoru in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State exploded and caught fire.

It was also learnt that some other oil thieves sustained injuries.

The fire was said to have been ignited by a gang of oil thieves who attempted to break and scoop oil from the pipeline.

It was further gathered that officials of Agip were battling to put out the fire.

But there were claims that soldiers attached to the Joint Task Force, Operation Pulo Shield, ignited the inferno when they fired at some suspected oil thieves.

JTF, however, denied the claims and blamed the explosion on the activities of economic saboteurs.

The Media Coordinator, JTF, Col. Onyema Nwachukwu, confirmed the explosion.

Nwachukwu said, "Information reaching us confirmed that there was actually a blast on the NAOC Agip riser. The cause has so far been attributed to possible sabotage by some disgruntled elements who have grievances with the operations of oil companies in the area.

"The JTF has no security platform in the area. It is certainly not as a result of the security activity against oil thieves."

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