

July 13th, 2015



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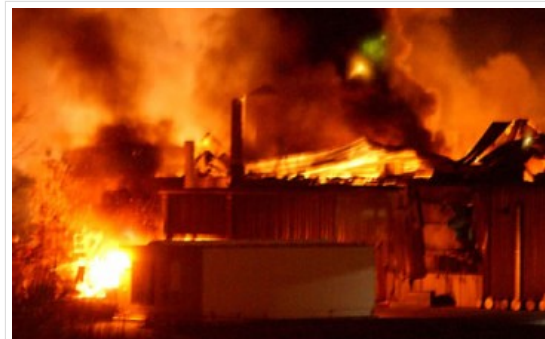
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Explosion kills 12 oil workers, others in Bayelsa

JULY 11, 2015 : SIMON UTEBOR 2 COMMENTS



No fewer than 12 persons suspected to be oil workers have died in a pipeline explosion in Azuzuama in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Also, three unidentified persons were injured in the explosion, which occurred on Thursday night along the Tebidaba-Azuzuama trunk line belonging to the Nigerian Agip Oil Company.

The explosion took place at an oil spill site operated by Agip where a joint investigation

visit was ongoing.

Officials of Agip, representatives of the host community and Bayelsa State Ministry of Environment were investigating the cause of a recent oil spill in the area.

According to a statement by an Eni spokesperson, Mr. Filippo Cotalini, the parent company of NAOC, the cause of the explosion is being investigated.

Cotalini said, "An explosion occurred on Thursday, July 9, 2015, late afternoon, at the site of the repair works of the Tebidaba-Clough Creek line, an oil pipeline in Nigeria's onshore Niger Delta, previously damaged by acts of sabotage.

"The explosion resulted in the death of 12 members of the maintenance team of a local service company, with three others being injured.

"The causes of the incident are still under investigation by both Eni and the local authorities.

"The company expresses its deepest condolences to the families involved in this tragic accident."

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But community sources said the explosion occurred during a joint investigation visit for the official clamping of a spillage site along the route of the Agip pipeline.

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They said the victims of the explosion were burnt beyond recognition.

Though no one could confirm the identities of the victims, it was gathered that the joint investigation team was made up of officials from the Ministry of the Environment, Department of Petroleum Resources, NAOC, representative of the Azuzuama Community and the NOSDRA.

It was further learnt that two soldiers attached to the team for security cover might have also been killed in the explosion.

A former Vice-Chairman, Azuzuama Community Development Committee, Dennis Dumde, confirmed the recovery of 12 bodies from the explosion site between Thursday night and Friday morning.

He said though the source of the fire was still unknown, the identities of the victims could not be ascertained as they were burnt beyond recognition.

Also confirming the incident, the State Coordinator, Environmental Right Action, Mr. Alagoa Morris, said a team of government officials had been deployed to the community by the Commissioner for Environment, Mr. Inuro Wills.

The police spokesperson, Mr. Asinim Butswat, confirmed the incident.

He said the incident occurred while Agip workers were carrying out routine maintenance at Gbaraun/Tebidaba.

He said 12 persons, including a soldier were burnt beyond recognition. According to him, six other bodies were recovered while four persons were rescued alive and were undergoing treatment at an undisclosed hospital.

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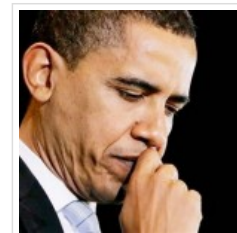
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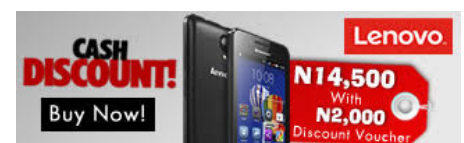
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