

Death toll in Rivers oil explosion now 15

**Dennis Naku, Port
Harcourt**

THE casualty figure from the crude oil explosion that ravaged the Rumuekpe community in Emuoha Local Government Area of Rivers State has increased to 15.

PUNCH Metro reports that the state

police command and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps confirmed that 12 people who were scooping fuel from a leaked pipeline died while five vehicles, four tricycles and one motorcycle were burnt in the explosion which occurred on March 3.

But the Chairman of Emuoha Local



• Rivers CP, Okon Effiong Government Area, Dr Chidi Lloyd, in an

exclusive interview with our correspondent in his office on Sunday, said three persons that suffered severe burns later died in the hospital.

Lloyd said, "So, I felt very sad, especially as we have done everything to dissuade our people from engaging in this type of trade, going to

scoop oil to refine the same.

"I always told them of the danger that is involved in going to illegally refine crude. They do not have the know-how to do these things. "About three persons again later died in the hospital. That brought the total number of casualties to

15."

Lloyd recalled that Emuoha was one of the local governments that confronted the menace of illegal bunkering headlong, including tackling a cabal behind it when the state Governor, Nyesom Wike gave the marching orders to council bosses to identify and destroy illegal refineries in their domains.