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## Pipeline fire kills 100 in Lagos

BY OUR REPORTER ON JULY 23, 2015

COVER

### Police recover Arepo NNPC's site from vandals

By Chioma Igbokwe

**AT least, 100 suspected vandals were yesterday roasted to death along Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) pipeline at Arepo in Ogun State.**

**The victims were scooping fuel at about 2am when one of them was said to have lit a fire. The inferno was still raging as at Press time.**

The area, which used to be guarded by Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC), was abandoned since the Buhari administration revoked the contract. The job of guarding pipelines was given to militias by the former Jonathan administration.

When *Crime Watch Today* visited the scene, some vandals who survived the inferno, were battling to put out the fire while others moved bodies into canoes.

Also close to the scene were policemen attached to the IGP Special Task Force on Anti-Pipeline Vandalism who were immediately contacted by the NNPC to salvage the situation.

One of the mobile policemen said they are making plans to create an access to the area, which had been overgrown with weeds. "You can see there is no tent in this area. The one that was in existence was set ablaze by vandals who attacked members of OPC. We were, however, invited by NNPC to secure the area while repairs will be done.

"More than 100 vandals were roasted in that inferno. As you can see, we do not have a tent, no pathway to the scene of the incident. The best option is for helicopters to access the area or better still create an access road to the site," the mobile policeman said.



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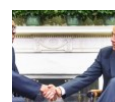
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Confirming the tragedy, the new boss of the task force, CSP Valentine Olumese, who also visited scene, said the police will take over the protection of the area. “ The tent that was destroyed will be repaired and access to the scene will be created. Our men will maintain presence.”

He also assured that vandalization will be reduced to the barest minimum.

On the number of casualties, Olumese said he could not confirm the number.

Pipelines vandalism especially in the Arepo and Ikorodu areas had become a recurring decimal since 2010. It, however, assumed, a deadly dimension since 2013.

On January 11, 2014, vandals destroyed some NNPC facilities in the area. The incident led to scores of deaths. Most of the victims were oil thieves who were consumed in the inferno.

As in the latest tragedy, the cause of the fire is always traced to rivalry among oil thieves.

In an incident last year, some policemen were missing after a gun duel with hoodlums.

At least, nine policemen attached to the IGP Special Anti-Vandalism Squad were allegedly captured by the oil thieves. Till date, their bodies have not been found.

Earlier this year, OPC members engaged to provide security for NNPC facilities had a taste of the vandals brutality when they unleashed terror on them leading to the death of a newly-wedded pregnant woman and a pedestrian.

The pregnant woman identified as Mrs Damilola Fajan and another pedestrian were said to have been killed during crossfire between OPC guards and the vandals.

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