

# Fire kills 20 persons at bunkering site in Rivers

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From **Tony John**, Port Harcourt

**Over 20 persons including two pregnant women reportedly lost their lives and many wounded after fire outbreak occurred at an illegal crude oil refining site in Rumucholu community, in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State.**

Daily Sun gathered that there was fire outbreak at the illegal site late Sunday's night and that all the people numbering over 45 who were the site were affected. It was gathered from a community source, who pleaded anonymity, that the fire incident occurred as a result of attempt by some persons to set up illegal refinery at the said location, where security operatives had previously destroyed the illegal refinery about two weeks ago.

According to the community source, the victims had gone to trade on the petroleum product before the fire ignited from a refining site.

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The source, said: “More than 40 people were there at the site. They were there scooping and bagging crude oil when the premises caught fire .

“The fire came from a refining site that is close to the point where they were bagging the crude. Many Isiokpo, Oduoha people, and Ibaa people were there. Seven of the people died inside the pit where they were scooping the crude. About 10 burnt to ashes in the pit.

“About 30 people died at the site, while over 15 have even rushed to the hospital. I heard that three of them have died while they were being rushed to the hospital.”

However, the Chief Security Officer of Ibaa community, Rufus Welekwe, while expressing sadness over the incident, appealed to the youths of the community to stay away from illegal crude oil refining and ensure that they engage themselves in legitimate business.