

Three die at illegal refinery site in Rivers

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Three persons have been feared dead after allegedly inhaling gas fumes at a site where illegally acquired or stolen crude oil is cooked and refined to petroleum products and later sold to members of the public.

The business of cooking crude oil, known as kpofire in local parlance, thrives in rural communities, including Oduoha community in Emuoha Local Government Area of Rivers State.

According to the youth leader of Oduohw Community, Friday Wekere who spoke to a Port Har-

court based radio station, the victims had gone to the site to buy fuel when they suddenly collapsed and died despite efforts to revive them.

Wekere said the victims, a man and two women were between the ages 26 and 35, adding that some of the persons who joined the rescue efforts almost suffered the same fate as they too could not move again.

According to him, "as they inhaled the gas, they could not move again, and the three of them fell.

"So people now mobilised and brought the three persons out around 10 to 11 pm last night (Monday)."

The spokesman of the state police command, Nnamdi Omoni, however said he was unaware of the incident when contacted.