

Husband, wife, one other die as another illegal refinery explodes in Abia, scores injured

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Barely two weeks after a similar incident claimed about 100 lives in neighbouring Imo State, no fewer than three persons have been reported dead following an explosion at an illegal refinery situated in Uzuaku community in Ukwa West Local Government Area of Abia State.

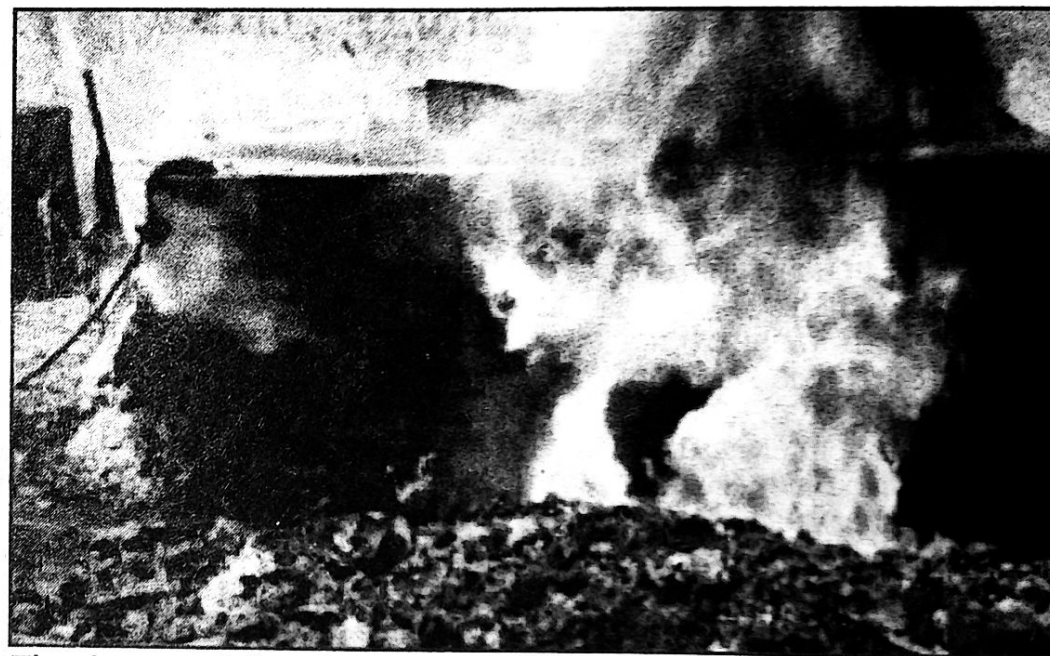
Reports say the incident happened on Friday night and casualties include husband and wife with an only son of another family.

A source said illegal bun-

kering and refining of crude resumed in the area after the Shell pipeline that service the Uzuaku/Owaza axis which have not had crude oil running through the pipeline for some weeks leading to the stoppage of illegal oil bunkering activities in the area, opened the pipes for product flow.

The source added that the resumption of pumping of crude oil along the pipeline within the week may have prompted the illegal refinery operators to go back to their business.

A community leader, who confirmed the incident, said while the persons that were burnt to death at the scene of the incident were buried imme-



The damaged illegal refinery

diately, a few others died later at the hospital and some were still recovering.

The source also said the death toll so far has hit close to 10.