

11 Die in Pipeline Vandalisation, Cult Wars in Rivers

About 11 persons died in two different incidents in Ogoni and Eleme both in Rivers State during pipeline vandalisation incident and inter-cult clashes.

○ In Ogale Eleme, Eleme Local Government area of the state, six persons were confirmed dead while the whereabouts of one was still unknown when residents of the area went to scoop petroleum products from burst pipelines.

It was gathered that a pregnant woman, two boys and two girls lost their lives while scooping fuel.

When THISDAY visited the site, what looked

*From Ahamefula Ogbu
in Port Harcourt*

like a mixture of Premium Motor Spirit, Diesel, Kerosene and crude oil littered the entire place.

One account had it that the victims died as a result of the fumes that wafted from the spill site while another version had it that the depth of the flooded place before the incident was not known so those who went deeper into the waters to scoop fuel got drowned.

At Nchia-Eleme, some of the affected families were seen mourning their dead but were too bitter to reply to the

numerous questions posed by news men.

A closer look at the venue of the disaster showed that small holes were dug on the ground where the products percolated and were scooped into containers. As at the time of the visit, some of

the holes still had petroleum products in them though no one was seen still scooping fuel.

○ At the Ogoni scene which has acquired a high level notoriety, two cult groups which have been fighting for control of the area, the Dewell

and Degbam clashed again yesterday, leaving four persons dead.

The fight which used to center on Bodo this time, spread to Bori and Khana where fleeing villagers said the guns of the cult groups clattered through out the night while no

fewer than four corpses were lying in the open space.

When THISDAY called the Police Public Relations Officer in the State, Mrs. Ireju Barasua on phone, she said she was not aware of any of the incidents.

Sale of PDP Nomination Forms Begins Tuesday

All PDP members interested in contesting elective offices during the 2007 general elections are requested to collect their nomination forms beginning from Oct. 10.

National Publicity Secretary of the party, Mr John Odey announced this in a statement made

available to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja today, saying the decision was taken late Thursday at its National Working Committee meeting.

"Aspirants are to pay to designated banks, collect the tellers and pick up the forms at the National Secretariat, zonal offices

and state secretariat of the party," he said.

He said the NWC approved a procedure that will ensure adequate security, orderliness and accountability in the sale and collection of the expression of interest and nomination forms by contestants.

Odey said the state

for the purpose of this congress," he added.

Ahead of the party's congresses and convention, he said, PDP would on Oct. 31 and Nov. 1 conduct a stakeholders' conference in Abuja, to enlighten members on its code of conduct and guidelines for the selection of candidates.