

Oil spillage: Three persons feared dead

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THREE persons are feared dead in Ekorinim community located in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State as a result of an oil spill that has devastated portions of the area. Among the dead is the first son of the clan head, Prince Ekpo Etim, who *Sunday Vanguard* gathered met his death while passing by the area where the spill occurred as he was said to have inhaled the toxic fumes from the spilled oil.

Speaking to *Sunday Vanguard* about the incident which occurred in the PPMC depot, the clan head of Ekorinim, His Highness Etim Ekpo said, "my only son went for fishing near the place where the oil pipe is leaking and the fumes in the place overwhelmed him and he collapsed and died instantly. This is the second time this kind of thing is happening. In 2000, more than ten people died in similar circumstances."

The incident which is said to have occurred last Thursday threw the community into panic after the residents of the com-

munity woke up in the morning to find fuel gushing out of the oil pipeline, sending them scampering for safety. Three persons including Prince Etim Ekpo however lost their lives in the incident.

Commenting further on the incident in his palace, the Clan Head of the community said the pipelines carrying the fuel were obsolete, and called on the NNPC management to vacate

the area arguing it was the only way the people of the community could be protected from sudden and unexpected death.

The grieving Clan Head said his son who lost his life was forty years and had three children before he met his death. He added that his son had always engaged in fishing. Asked what he thought the NNPC could do for him, he said helplessly, "how can I get to them?"

Niger gov knows fate at election petition tribunal tomorrow

NIGER State governor, Dr. Muazu Babangida Aliyu, is to know his fate tomorrow whether he will remain as governor or have his mandate squashed as the election tribunal is set to deliver judgment tomorrow in the petition filed by All Nigeria Peoples Party, (ANPP) gubernatorial candidate, Barrister David Umaru challenging his victory.

The case had dragged for over one year during which 48 petitions were filed in the tribunal, three witnesses were called and a volume of exhibits were also tendered by the petitioner.

Subsequently, the respondents, including the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the governor did not present any witness but tendered two exhibits. Two weeks ago, the two parties submitted written documents to bring the case to a close by submitting letters and receipt related to the February salary said to have been paid into the account of Dr. Babangida Aliyu before he resigned as a permanent secretary in the federal civil service.