

Fire kills 35 persons at Rivers illegal oil refining site



By Davies Iheamnachor, PORT HARCOURT

No fewer than 35 people have been reported burnt to death at an illegal oil refining site in Rivers State.

The incident happened at Ibaa Community, Emohua Local Government Area of the state.

It was gathered that fire broke out at the illegal oil refining site, late Sunday night, and that all the people, numbering over 45, were affected.

A source in the community, Emmanuel Daniel, said the victims had gone to trade on the petroleum product when the fire, started at the refining site, consumed them.

Daniel noted that people from Isiokpo Kingdom in Ikwerre Local Government Area of the state, Ibaa and Oduoha in Emohua LGA were affected.

Daniel narrated: “More than 40 people were there at the site. They were there scooping and bagging crude oil when the place caught fire.

“The fire came from a refining site that is close to the point they were bagging the crude.

“Many Isiokpo and Oduoha people, and Ibaa people were there. Seven of the people died inside the pit where they were scooping the crude. About 10 were severely burnt in the pit.

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

At press time, police could not confirm the development as the Police Public Relations Officer of the state Command, Grace Iringe-Koko, said she would get back to this reporter later.