Special Report #

Location: Ile Epo/Pipeline Oke-Odo Abule Egba, Agbado Oke Odo Local Government Area of Lagos state.

Date of visit: 20 January, 2020

Field Monitors: Fagbenro Olalekan & Adewumi Adeniyi

Highlights:

- Eight people reported dead
- Several houses torched by the raging fires
- 15 trucks burnt at explosion site

Introduction

Field monitors of the Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria (ERA/FoEN) visited Ile Epo/Pipeline area in Abule Egba area of Lagos following a massive explosion that occurred at Ile Epo/Pipeline area of Abule Egba at around 7:45pm on Sunday 19 January 2020 when a pipeline belonging to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) exploded.

The ERA/FoEN team which visited the scene on Monday 20 January learnt that the explosion was caused by leaking pipes that unidentified individuals were scooping fuel from. It was gathered that the leaks had been on for
sometime and the NNPC and Petroleum Products Marketing Company (PPMC) did nothing about it. As at the time of the ERA/FoEN visit, it was gathered that eight people had lost their lives as a result of the inferno, with over 15 heavy duty trucks burnt. Tens of houses around the location were also gutted.

Though ERA/FoEN could not estimate the worth of property destroyed, they could be worth millions of naira.

An eye witness who refused his name to be taken said that the community was aware of the scooping of the petroleum products and had made frantic efforts for the leaks to be clamped but the NNPC did not carry out the clamping until the incident happened. Another community member revealed that a drilling machine had been observed at the site which may have been used to cut open a section of the pipeline where the fire started from.

The victims included a woman and her child who were burnt while trying to escape from the fire. The incident is the fourth happening in Abule Egba after the December 2006 incident without the NNPC putting a check to stem a recurrence.

**Testimonies**

“I was on my way from church when I saw the fire and I started running for my life”

_Agbabiaka Olayinka, Resident_

I was in the bedroom when I heard people shouting and I stepped out to see what’s happening and saw people running, so I joined without looking back”

_Olusesi Kabirat, Resident_

It’s as if the world was ending when the fire started because I was sitting at shop down the road when the fire started.
Observation/Conclusion:

During the visit the ERA/FoEN team observed that no NNPC or PPMC official was on ground. The rupture site had been hurriedly covered with sand by the locals. There is the likelihood that if a proper clamping is not done, a spill and fire may not be too distant in happening again.

Pictures from the explosion site

One of the several trucks gutted
Rooms at the back of a church

A building gutted at the end of a street
Recommendations:

- The NNPC and PPMC should take immediate steps to trace and clamp the spill sites in Abule Egba
- Impacted households should be relocated and compensated
- PPMC must be compelled to carry out regular integrity checks on all NNPC facilities throughout the federation
- The Federal Government should ensure that NNPC acts responsibly and adheres to internationally accepted standards. Failure by its subsidiary the PPMC to clamp the spill in Abule Egba may lead to similar explosions in the future.