

## Nigeria: A Blast in an illegal oil refinery kills 18

October 5, 2023

October 3, 2023: At least 18 people died in southern Nigeria when an illegal oil refinery exploded into flames, a security official and residents said on Tuesday.

The blaze, which broke out late on Sunday in River state's Emohua district, occurred when a home-made refinery ignited a nearby oil reservoir, leaving victims severely burnt.

"25 injured people were rescued," said **Olufemi Ayodele**, spokesman for the local **Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps**. "Most of the victims were youths ... a pregnant woman and a young lady getting ready for her marriage ceremony next month were all casualties," he said.



*Emohua Campus of Rivers State University*

According to **Chima Avadi**, a local activist. "When impoverished locals tap pipelines for crude from the vandalized pipe, which is carrying the crude, they refine it in local refineries. In the simplest case, they boil the crude in drums for refining it. If the crude catches fire, people working on refining it, suffer injuries."

Illegal refining is common in the oil-rich **Niger Delta region** of Nigeria as to make fuel to sell for a profit. Last year there was a similar accident in **Imo state** and more than 100 people were killed.

Nigeria – an OPEC member and one of Africa’s largest petroleum producers – has for years tried to clamp down on illegal crude refineries, with little success, in part because powerfully connected politicians and security officials are involved. “The money they make from there in one or two days is more than what a civil servant can make in a year,” said **Fyneface Dumnamene**, the **Executive Director of Youths and Environmental Advocacy Centre**.

Crude oil theft, pipeline vandalism and legal battles over oil spills are pushing oil majors operating in Nigeria to sell their **onshore and shallow water** oil-fields to concentrate on deepwater operations.

It is estimated that Nigeria lost at least **\$3 Bn worth of crude oil** to theft **between January 2021 and February 2022**.

*[www.DiGiNews360.com](http://www.DiGiNews360.com) calls upon the States and the Federal Government to take the Law and Order situation in Nigeria seriously and to ensure that illegal activities do not go on merrily without any care for the Law of the Land.*

*It was reported in the media that as many as 300,000 barrels of crude a day is pilfered from pipes, carrying it within Nigeria. [www.DiGiNews360.com](http://www.DiGiNews360.com) cannot confirm this figure. But it is well-known that such activities of tapping the pipelines, carrying the crude are common. These must be stopped. The Federal Government and the States must see that the writ of the government is not flouted by miscreants.*

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