

Between June and December, 2008 the Ikarama people and environment experienced five oil spills from Shell's facility. The last of the above spills occurred on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December, 2008 along the Ughelli/Rumuekpe trunk line, at a spot that had ruptured some years back. Sadly, even though Shell Petroleum Development Company [SPDC] knew about the rupture and was at Ikarama the day after the spill occurred, the crude oil was allowed to spew into the environment for about seven weeks before SPDC returned to effect clamping. As a result, several thousand barrels of crude oil flowed freely into the nearby Obroun lake and, spread to the Oya lake and environs; destroying aquatic lives and deprived the families that owned the lakes a major source of livelihood.

Even though SPDC awarded a recovery contract soon after clamping was done on the ruptured spot [on the pipeline], the uncontrollable fire that gutted the whole oil spill impacted area on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> of March, 2009 and its resultant effect is still the subject matter here. Since this matter was tracked right from the early days of the spill [in December, 2008], it was only appropriate that follow up visits be made to keep pace with developments.

Those who accompanied ERA's Alagoa Morris to the oil spill/fire devastated lakes were some members of the Egberi-wari family of Ikarama, owners of Oya lake. They include Chief Luke Obonah, Mrs. Lucky Odoyibo [wife of the Head of Egberi-wari family], Mrs. Animite Kologa, Mrs. Julie Ogbonah, Pastor Fear God Kologa [former Deputy Paramount Chief of Ikarama]

*This oil spill occurred on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December, 2008. After allowing the crude oil to flow into the Obroun lake and spreading to ours [Oya lake] for about seven weeks, SPDC came to clamp the leaking spot. Before the clamping, due to the negligence of Shell, slick of crude oil*

had spread over the surface of our lake and beyond. You already have some information about all these. Now, after they clamped the spot that ruptured, they awarded contract to recover some of the crude oil [recovery contract]. But, just two days of commencement of work by the recovery contractor, Shell ordered the contractor to stop work; withdrawing his Permission To Work [[PTW]. As ordered, the contractor stopped work and, while people engaged by the recovery contractor were waiting to hear when the job would continue, the next thing we saw was an uncontrollable fire on the 1<sup>st</sup>

of March, 2009. This fire caused more damage to the environment; it extended to our plantain and banana farms, destroying everything on its path.

Four days after the fire incident, Shell's site Supervisor came back to site. I used the opportunity to ask him some questions. I asked him, Why are you here today after the fire? We have been inviting you before the fire incident and you refused to show up. Today you are here, how came about the fire? Who was the safety man you appointed to take care of the oil spill impacted site before you disappeared till? The answer to the last question was nobody. I then asked if Shell no longer regards safety as important. The site Supervisor said he could not answer that question. It was then I told him that the Oya lake owned by my family [[Egberi-wari] was not very close to the oil spill site, but SPDC allowed the slick to spread to cover the whole lake; destroying all the aquatic lives therein and rendering it useless. SPDC is also responsible for the destruction of plantain and banana farms by the resulting fire and I will demand for compensation from Shell.

I told the site Supervisor that I will demand for my rights regarding the losses our family has suffered as a result of Shell's negligence in failing to act promptly after the oil spill. I suspect Shell as the brain behind the fire. They are responsible for the fire because they withdrew the PTW without any good reason. They have done this to avoid the huge expenses involved in the recovery and eventual clean-up of the impacted environment.

*When the oil spill spread from the Obroun lake to our family lake [Oya lake], I was really disturbed because that was where I used to kill cray fish. I set my cray fish traps and checked them twice daily. The whole community knows that was the source of the cray fish I used to sell to support my family. In fact, I used some of the proceeds from the cray fish business to take care of my farming expenses like clearing new farmlands. The cray fish business used to assist me from year to year. It was painful that the oil spill affected that lake and denied me and my family one of our major means of making ends meet. It is a terrible experience. I would greatly appreciate assistance at this time .*

*You have heard from my family members. I don t feel like saying anything. A Shell staff told me once that Shell is wicked. I believe that statement, Shell is wicked indeed. One thing I know is that we are not going to let Shell walk away with this injustice. We shall meet them in court very soon. Already we are consulting with our lawyer. As peace loving people that is the step we are going to take against Shell .*

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1. Shell cleans up the polluted environment immediately.
2. Shell pays commensurate compensation to the affected community people.
3. Shell ensures proper maintenance of their pipelines and facilities to avert a reoccurrence.