

Location: Ikarama Community at Adibawa Delivery Line, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Date of visit: 15 and 18 August, 2010

INTRODUCTION

At exactly 2:30 pm on Sunday August 15, 2010, ERA/FoEN's attention was drawn to another oil spill at Ikarama Community. Natives called ERA/FoEN monitor on phone to report that crude oil was spewing close to the community at the Adibawa delivery line owned by Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC).

Ikarama Community can be accessed by road and locals are involved mainly in Farming and fishing.

Community sources told ERA monitor that it was the presence of three Shell staff that arrived the community in a Hilux Jeep that made indigenes suspicious that something had happened.

According to a community source (a member of the Host Communities Network of Nigeria), the oil workers had just returned from inspecting the spill site when some of the community folks who were not aware of what had happened spotted them at the entrance to Adibawa delivery Line.

The spill occurred in the early hours of Sunday August 15.

It was gathered that, Mr. Berebose Jonah, Shell surveillance contractor in charge of the pipe line alerted the oil firm of the incident which informed the presence of the company personnel in the community. Although the cause of spill was sketchy as at ERA's first visit on the same day the alert came through, when ERA visited again on 18 August 2010, Shell officials were seen going about attempting to clamp the spill points. At the end, the company attributed the cause of spill to sabotage.

TESTIMONIES

Mrs. Rebecca Williams, 25 year old mother of five

Most of their fertile lands have been destroyed and the few places currently in use for farming gives poor yield and as such we are no longer making enough money from farming any more. I have started buying yam in the market now because my farm is polluted

Mrs. Ozie Susan Shadrach, a 38 years old mother of three

You see! The spills have destroyed every farm around the place and rendered this huge farmland useless; it spoiled everything when it occurred. We used to cultivate plantain, banana and other food crops in that land before crude oil spill destroyed them. This situation has forced

me and so many other farmers to relocate further into the bush to explore for more productive lands. Presently we have less farmland to produce sufficient food for our children. As a result we buy food from other communities. Crude oil slick has also killed our fish and forced surviving fish to move into swamps in other communities. With this knowledge we are even hesitant in consuming fresh fish that are killed in other areas because of the fear that they may be poisonous. For the past three days I have been using this route to farm and perceiving this odor of crude oil which is responsible for my catarrh and cough..

Mr. Afolabi Marcus, Youth from the community

We are not happy with the oil spill, no matter the cause; nothing good has come our way from it. Family farms have been burnt and there is no hope of fishing and hunting in those areas for a very long time. Instead of Shell to compensate us and remediate the environment, during clamping exercise Shell workers will present suspicious persons as government representatives to discourage the community from taking the matter to the appropriate quarters

Mr. Confidence Festus, Youth from the community

It is Shell that is causing all these spills around our community. In 2008 the company made a promise to us that it will engage more surveillance guards from here if there are no sabotage-related spill for a period of one year. Not only that, they even promised to increase the current salaries of those working as surveillance guard. But, up till now, as I speak to you Shell is yet to fulfill its promises to the community youths; while the youths have met their own side of the bargain by being vigilant to guarantee no sabotage related spill occurred..

OBSERVATION

About 30 meters from a bridge constructed by Shell for easy access to its Okordia manifold, is the Adibawas Delivery Line Right of way. Weed around the pipeline is most times removed since that is the only access route natives use to access their farms. The strong smell of crude oil was could be perceived in the environment around Ezewari-Gbe bush through the pipeline. ERA field monitor witnessed a hole containing a stagnant, thick black crude oil (point of rupture) that has stopped leaking with a heap of mud beside it. Though the cleared area in Shell's right of way had no sign of crude, much of the crude oil had spewed into the environment was lodged in shrubs and grass in the swamp.

Some persons were seen trying to use booms to contain the spread of the crude oil slick but judging by the volume of spill it seems more like a futile effort

ERA DEMANDS

Shell should allow community members properly identify those they call representatives
Shell should carry out cleanup of the impacted swamp and follow up with remediation to enable community folks go about their normal farming activities.

Shell should respect the regulations regarding Joint Investigation Visits which must include genuine representatives of the people, not faceless community representatives

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Send a letter to your legislator (Local Government, State and Federal) to call Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) to order.

Demand a clean up of the swamps and farmlands affected by the slick from Shell facility

Write to Shell addresses below and demand that it cleanup and remediate impacted lands and pay compensation to the community folks

Shell Addresses

Tel: +234 9 413 8110

PORT-HARCOURT

The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Ltd.

P.O.Box 263, Shell Industrial Area, Rumuobiakani

Port Harcourt

Nigeria

Tel: +234 84 429999

Manager, Media Relations

Shell Nigeria

Tel: +234 1 27 65019

Fax: 234 1 2636791

E-mail: shellnigeria@ shell.com