

Subject: The Wrong Right Steps of Shell (Story of a persistent spill)

Location: Ikarama, Bayelsa State

ERA monitors visited the Ikarama community on 4 September 2007 and sometime within the next 10 days Shell and her contractors went to the area with the objective of cleaning up the spill. However, we can confirm that they only attempted to clear the crude that was spilled into the community river. The crude spewed into the bush, farms and ponds have not been cleaned up.

Taylor Creek is now dotted with islands of floating crude, especially where trapped by water lilies (acting as boom) in Zarama Nyambiri and Epie Zarama Water fronts.

The affected communities include: Ikarama, Kalaba, Agbobiri, Epie Zarama, and Zarama Nyambiri. The Taylor Creek runs through all the above towns. The impact may spread.

The Ikarama spill occurred in June 2007. As is usual, the crude will not disappear on its own account

According to the Deputy Paramount Ruler of Ikarama, Chief FearGod Kologa, Shell came with the contractor to clear the oil you saw last time with all the water lilies and other vegetations that acted as boom to contain the spill in the creek. Like I told you before, it seems Shell has taken a new decision to hire very unskilled contractors to handle this serious situation. But, they (Shell) should also come and pay compensation for the damages to our crops. Some of our people left their cassava in the creek (soaked) to prepare foofoo, before the spillage and; all these were affected. We expect Shell to come and pay compensation. Still, the crude in the ponds and farms in the bush may flow into the river any moment from now, though, it seems Shell has decided to clean the creek before the bush. You know our main occupation here is fishing / farming, and the spill has so affected us

Lamenting over the spill, Mrs. Penninah Ivelive, from Zarama Nyambiri said, This thing (crude oil spill on the Taylor Creek ) has prevented us from eating. Since we do not have water flowing in our taps, the river is the only source of water for drinking, cooking, washing and bathing. Since the spill on the creek, we no longer use it as we used to. Our children, who are ignorant, often go to swim in it only to come out crying and scratching their eyes and other parts of their bodies, besides becoming feverish .

For Justice Ikah, a youth of Zarama Nyambiri the oil is affecting the fishes in the creek, fishing activities are no more and even the cassava our people usually soak in the river (Taylor creek) for the purposes of preparing foofoo were badly affected as the spill took us by surprise. Our only source of drinking has been polluted with adverse health conditions as a consequence .

Another community youth (Male) Jonah Zagunu, a student, told us that Last week when I was ill and went to a clinic in Port Harcourt , I was told that my illness is related to the water I drank.

Apart from this spill affecting fishes and cray fish, even the fishing gears are affected and damaged by the spill .

Confirming his people s testimonies, Chief Esau Bekewei, a member of the council of chiefs in the area said As you can see, what else need I say. The spill has affected my people both in health and economic terms. Shell should own up to her responsibility and save us further problems .

- Shell should take immediate steps to clean up the spill in all the affected communities along the Taylor Creek not only as done in Ikarama.
- Compensation should be paid to all those who have been affected.
- The Government should ensure that Shell acts responsibly and adhere to internationally accepted standards. Failure by Shell to clean up the spill in other communities may lead to crisis in the near future.

1. Send a letter to your legislator (Local Government, State and National) to call Shell to order. Demand a clean up of the degraded Ikarama environment 3 months is too long a time to ignore a spill.
2. Write to Shell and demand that they should immediately halt the spill, repair their faulty equipment and compensate the community and the people for the havoc wreck on their environment and means of livelihood.