

# Niger Delta Weekly: Mitigating Artisanal Oil Refining Related Violence in Rivers State

October 01-07, 2023

## Description

This special edition of the weekly update spotlights natural resources conflict and human-induced environmental disasters in the Niger Delta with a focus on illegal artisanal oil refining related violence and disasters in Rivers State. According to data (see map below), illegal artisanal oil refining related violence and disasters caused over 150 fatalities in the Rivers State between January 2020 and August 2023. Recent data shows the prevalence of artisanal oil refining related violence and fire outbreaks in the State. In March 2023, for instance, 12 persons were reportedly killed in an explosion caused by illegal oil bunkering and artisanal refining activities in Rumuekpe community, Emohua LGA. In July, 16 persons including fishers were reportedly killed by fire while they were scooping spilled petroleum products at a Jetty in Okrika LGA. In August, government security forces allegedly bombed several illegal oil refineries and neutralized many oil thieves at different locations in Akuku-Toru, Bonny and Degema LGAs. Recently, on October 01, 2023, 35 persons were allegedly killed by fire at an illegal oil refinery in Ibaa town, Emohua LGA.

## Why it Matters

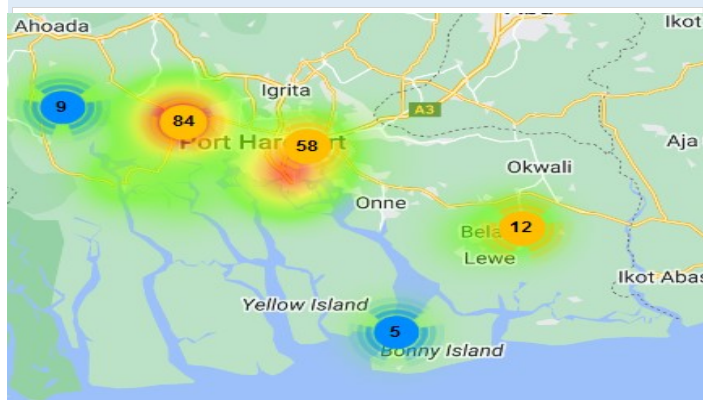
The prevalence of illegal artisanal oil refining related violence and disasters including periodic fire outbreaks caused by oil pipeline explosions is worrying, especially considering that such incidents usually result in many human fatalities, destruction of vegetation and natural habitats, and environmental pollution. The prevailing situation could intensify the devastation of the traditional livelihoods of farming and fishing, and worsen human insecurity. This could bring about lasting socio-economic, political and security repercussions in the State.

**Social:** The growing prevalence of illegal artisanal oil refining related violence and disasters could have a devastating impact on the lives, safety and health of residents. Recurrent pipeline explosion and fire outbreak could cause internal displacements and social dislocations which could intensify communal tensions and insecurity. It could also increase environmental degradation including soot pollution which could cause respiratory tract infections and skin diseases in the State.

**Economic:** The recurrence of artisanal oil refining related violence and disasters could bring about devastating economic consequences. Fire outbreaks often cause the loss of lives and properties, and the disruption of livelihoods. Oil pipeline explosion and fire outbreaks typically result in shut-ins and shut-downs of operations by oil firms, and thus cause loss of revenue to businesses and the government.

**Political:** Illegal artisanal oil refining activities and related violence and disasters present additional environmental and human security burden on the government. Recurrent fire outbreaks could deepen environmental contamination including soot pollution in the State.

## Fatalities Heat Map of Illegal Oil Bunkering and Artisanal Refining in Rivers State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows geographical concentration of artisanal oil refining related fatalities in Rivers State from January 2020 - August 2023. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map [www.p4p-nigerdelta.org](http://www.p4p-nigerdelta.org)

## Prognosis

The prevalence of illegal artisanal oil refining related violence and disasters could intensify environmental conflicts and insecurity in the State. Stakeholders should collaborate with the government to integrate artisanal refining into the mainstream oil and gas sector through modular refineries. Stakeholders should also use the Host Community Development Trust (HCDT) to address the socio-economic and political dynamics of illegal oil refining, and raise awareness of the adverse effects of illegal artisanal oil refining.

## Contact Us

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## Report Incidents: IPDU Early Warning System

Please report any verified incident of conflict to the IPDU SMS early warning system: Text report to **080 9936 2222**

**Incident Details:** Kindly include the State, LGA, Town, Date, and brief incident description.



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