

URGENT ACTION

GAS EXPLOSION INJURES RESIDENT; DANGER REMAINS

The residents of Bille, a town in the Niger Delta, are facing the risk of gas explosions due to the worsening methane leaks that have affected the town since October 2025. Gas from an unidentified source is bubbling up through drinking water wells, cracks in the ground, as well as surrounding water bodies, posing a serious risk to people's lives and health. Reports have confirmed that a recent gas explosion on 3 September seriously injured a resident in the town. Nigeria's National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency must take immediate action to identify and stop the gas leaks.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Engr Chukwuemeka Woke FNSE

Chief Executive of the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency

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Dear Engineer Chukwuemeka Woke,

*I am writing to request that the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) urgently takes action to identify and stop the cause of the methane gas leaks that have been widely observed in the rivers, swamps and drinking water wells in the **town of Bille**, in the Niger Delta, and its surroundings. It has been 11 months since the methane gas leaks were discovered and NOSDRA has not yet resolved this issue.*

On 3 September, a gas explosion took place at a residence in the Opu Ibiila Community which caused the property's windows to shatter as well as causing serious burns to a resident's body requiring immediate medical treatment. This follows another incident in May 2026 when a water pump ignited, damaging a nearby residence. Amnesty International is concerned that without immediate intervention further incidents may occur.

It is the responsibility of NOSDRA, as the government agency charged with responding to oil and gas leaks, to identify the source of the leaking gas as a matter of urgency, so that it can be stopped, and the health and human rights of the people of Bille protected. NOSDRA should ensure that the operating companies responsible for the infrastructure in Bille should assist in fixing this problem.

NOSDRA must publish the results of the water and soil contamination testing survey that it commissioned in December 2025 as so far only the air quality reports have been made available to residents. NOSDRA should also publish new monthly surveys to inform the community of the current gas contamination levels. Supplies of clean drinking water are still not available in sufficient quantities for all residents of the town to consume and wash in. The local school has also been forced to relocate and is now facing gas leaks in its new location too.

I call on you to use your authority to deploy all available resources at NOSDRA towards identifying the cause of the gas leaks in Bille and to stop them before another major incident occurs. NOSDRA must release all available environmental contamination reports to the residents as well as providing clean water and healthcare provisions for everybody in the town.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Bille is a coastal community that is located on an island in the mouth of the Niger Delta and is only accessible by boat. Fishing is one of the community's main industries.

Like many other communities in the Niger Delta, Bille is also the location of infrastructure linked to the oil and gas industry. This includes two oil fields, as well as oil and gas pipelines and two flow stations. The cause of the leaking gas is not known, but research into methane leaks in other parts of the world have linked them to [poorly decommissioned oil and gas wells](#).

The Government of Nigeria has a duty to protect the residents of Bille from potentially lethal methane leaks, including any which may be caused or contributed to by private actors, such as oil companies. Amnesty International's 2023 report, [Nigeria: Tainted sale?](#) highlighted concerns about the poor state of some oil company infrastructure, and the impact this could have on a range of rights including the right to health and to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Amnesty's July 2026 report, [Nigeria: Lifting the Lid](#) revealed how Shell's own internal documents exposed its negligent oil operations in the Niger Delta. This included documents confirming that Shell's pipelines were old and not maintained to its safety guidelines, that Shell blamed illegal tapping of its pipelines by criminal gangs for the bulk of pollution incidents, but instead of repairing tapped pipelines Shell executives allowed taps to be left in place to minimise disruption to oil flows leading to accusations of "complicity" in the oil thefts. The documents also highlighted that Shell's parent company Royal Dutch Shell (RDS), now Shell Plc, was directly involved in decision-making around its Nigerian subsidiary company, the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), contrary to claims by Shell that SPDC acted autonomously.

Amnesty International has been supporting the residents of Bille and another community, Ogale, for more than ten years after their livelihoods had been destroyed and homes damaged by hundreds of oil spills. The pollution caused widespread devastation to the local environment, killing fish and plant life, and left thousands of people without access to clean drinking water. The communities brought their [claims in the UK courts](#) against the oil company, Shell Plc. The company denied the claims. A trial in the case is due to be held in May 2027.

The situation in Bille is indicative of a wider set of issues confronting one of Africa's most important oil producing regions. Decades of oil pollution, the negligent operations of oil operators, and weak regulation by state agencies has created an environmental catastrophe. In recent years the main oil companies, including Shell, which sold its Nigerian subsidiary SPDC in March 2025 to Renaissance, have divested their businesses in the Niger Delta, leaving others to clean up the environmental damage. Shell's own documentation indicated an estimated USD \$10.9 billion in decommissioning costs were required and that 375km² of mangrove forest in Nigeria had been harmed by pollution.

As a greenhouse gas, methane (fossil gas) contributes to global warming. It accounts for around 25% of current global emissions heating. Hence the Nigerian government should also commit to develop national pathways to transition away from fossil fuel in line with its international obligation (as per the Paris Agreement).

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 17 March 2027

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Bille Residents (all)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/0976/2026/en/>