

URGENT ACTION

BILLE RESIDENTS' HEALTH EMERGENCY CONTINUES

The residents of the town of Bille, in Nigeria's Niger Delta, are continuing to face a serious health emergency. Since October 2025, methane gas has been bubbling up in nearby rivers and swamps and is now affecting a significant amount of the town's drinking wells. Bille's school children have been forced to move to another community for safety. On 7 April, the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission visited Bille to launch an investigation into the leaks and has ordered oil companies operating nearby to find a solution. While this is a positive development, little has been done to identify and stop the leaks. Amnesty International continues to call for the investigation to be expedited, for the findings to be made public, and for action to be taken to stop the gas leaks.

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

Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Gas)

Rt. Honourable Ekperikpe Ekpo
Federal Ministry of Petroleum Resources
Block D, NNPC Towers, Herbert Macaulay way,
Abuja, Nigeria

Email: info@petroleumresources.gov.ng

Contact form: [Contact Us – Ministry of Petroleum Resources](#)

Twitter: @FMPRng

Dear Rt. Honourable Ekperikpe Ekpo,

I am writing to urge you to continue to take immediate action to protect the **residents of the Bille community** in Rivers State, Nigeria, from the methane gas leaks that are still bubbling up through at least 70% of its water wells, as well as rivers and swamps. Since the gas leaks were initially reported by fishermen in October 2025 at a site several kilometres from Bille, they have now spread across the local area including in the town centre of Bille itself. On 1 April, the Governor of Rivers State offered 100 million Naira (approximately 75,000 USD) to the Bille community to cover relief costs including food, safe drinking water, medical supplies and the costs of relocating school children who have been forced to move to another community.

Government agency-led investigations have taken place looking into both into the source of the gas leaks and the health implications for the local community. On 7 April, Nigeria's federal government, through its agency the [Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission](#) (NUPRC), visited Bille with the representatives of oil companies operating in the area. They conducted further tests and ordered the oil companies to collaborate in finding a solution to the leak. But it is several months since the government first became aware of the situation, and little has been done to identify the leaks or ensure the safety of the community. In December 2025, the [National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency \(NOSDRA\)](#) conducted air quality tests at several sites, which reported methane levels at one site were 10,000 times higher than normal background methane levels.

Following these recent developments, I call on you to use your authority to expedite the NUPRC investigation into the source of the gas leak, publish the results of this investigation and all previous investigations, and to order that immediate action be taken to stop the gas leaks. In addition, I ask you to authorize additional relief payments to be made to the community to cover essential supplies until the methane gas leaks are resolved and clean drinking water is restored.

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 an oil field, as well as oil and gas pipelines and a flowstation. 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 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 2027.

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: 1 August 2026

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/afr44/0834/2026/en/>