

3.4 Where there had been major oil spills in the past, e. g. in Ebubu in 1970 and in Yorla in 2000, no proper cleaning has been done. In the case of Ebubu where oil spilled, burned, and flowed into the water system for three months, the High Court of Rivers State in Port Harcourt has ruled Shell liable to pay 4bn Naira (40m US dollars) to the Ebubu community. Shell continues to contest its liability alleging that the spill happened in 1969 and not 1970 and was due to fighting in the Biafran war. Shell also claims that Ebubu is used for publicity against the company. It points out that access to the site is denied by community representatives. Inspection in Ebubu shows that the oil has drained into the soil. On the abandoned drilling site, oil films can be seen on the stagnant water in dug-holes. It is worth emphasising that even in the arid period the perforated soil surface shimmers with black fluid which can only be oil, as all the water has evaporated. A cleaning device has remained there



Pictures: Max Mader

Ebubu oil spill site, polluted soil and water, the cleaning device, and the gate.
Bottom right: HRH Chief George Obo Osaro, spokesman and leader of the Ejamah-Ebubu Clan.