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The Emergence of Militant Groups in the Niger Delta Region and the Challenges of National Security in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The Niger Delta region is richly endowed with crude oil and natural gas. However, in spite of its rich resource endowment the region is largely underdeveloped leading to the emergence of different militant groups. The activities of these groups have had numerous effects on oil production, host communities, Multi-National Oil Companies (MNOCs), the Nigerian State and the world at large. The different measures put in place by the government to manage the situation have not achieved the desired outcome; as the crisis has continued unabated. The country's national security is thus threatened; thereby making it extremely difficult for the government in promoting the general well-being of the people. The paper used both primary and secondary sources of data. The former is In-depth Interview (IDI) conducted with respondents while the latter are materials from books, journals etc. The study discovered that deep-rooted mistrust and frustration through long years of neglect is responsible for the emergence of militant groups in the region. It concluded that the crisis in the Niger Delta has had negative consequences on the people of the region, the MNOCs, the government and even the international communities which depend partly on crude oil from Nigeria. The national security is therefore negatively affected. It recommended that the government should sign into law the Petroleum Industrial Bill (PIB) that will make the host communities also benefit from their natural resources endowment and reduce thereby reducing the perceived marginalization, corruption, poverty etc. in the Niger Delta.

Keywords: niger delta, militancy, crude oil, government.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Nigeria state is richly endowed with immense human and material resources, which should naturally provide opportunity for national development (Oyakorotu, 2008). However, since the return to democracy in 1999 one issue that has continued to attract national attention is the activities of different militant groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), The Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF), The Niger Delta Avenger (NDA), The Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), the Ogoni Liberation Movement (OLM) and many more in the Niger Delta region whose activities have threatened national security and socio-economic development. The security of lives and properties are the fundamental reason for the existence of a government, in the first place as attested to by various social contract theories like Hobbes, Locke and Montesquieu. In Thomas Hobbes' book titled the Leviathan, the people want security and prevent a state of lawlessness where lives were brutish, nasty and short, so they surrendered their natural right to a body called government. A major challenge to Nigeria's national security is therefore the containment of diverse manifestations of violence spearheaded by various known and unknown

groups. According to Nwolise, (2011), citing, former President Olusegun Obasanjo while formulating Nigeria's Grand Strategy for National Security:

The primary objective of national security shall be to strengthen the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to advance her interests and objectives, to contain instability, control crime, eliminate corruption, enhance genuine development, progress and growth, and improves the welfare and well-being and quality of life of every citizen (Grand Strategy for National Security, 2001 in Nwolise, 2011).

National security is thus very important in every state because without it, the state is bound to experience great difficulty in harnessing its resources that will be geared towards promoting the general well-being of the people and development. In a lecture given at NIPSS by the former head of the state, Abdulsalami Abubakar, on the Challenges of Security in Nigeria "it is pertinent to consider security issues and problems that have affected the attitude, confidence and cooperation of all groups and segments that make up the Nigerian federation" (Abubakar, 2004).

This clearly shows that one of the greatest threats to national security since the beginning of the Fourth Republic is insecurity perpetuated by various known and unknown groups within the Nigerian state.

A challenging example is the case of different militant groups in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The activities of these groups that are fighting to correct the perceived injustice done to the region by the government and Multi-National Oil Companies (MNOCs), over the years, has taken centre stage in national and international discourse. This is because the Niger Delta region is of great importance to the Nigerian state, given its centrality to the country's political economy and national security. The Niger Delta region is Nigeria's oil belt; as it holds the bulk of the resources that sustains the economy. The region contributes about 80% of the total government revenue, 95% of foreign exchange and over 80% of national wealth (Tell, February 18, 2008). The Niger Delta presently hosts Nigeria's oil industry, including oil multinationals, state and local oil

companies, oil service companies, 'thousands of kilometers of oil pipelines, ten export terminals, four refineries and a massive liquefied natural gas (LNG) sector' (Watts, 2007).

Despite all these, the communities in the Niger Delta region suffer inadequate social, infrastructural and environmental degradation, displacement, poverty, neglect, human rights abuse and transport bottlenecks, which has hampered the development of the region (Naanen, 1995; Obi, 2004). Others are kidnapping, seizures of oil pipelines and installations, institutionalizing authorities as well as confrontational attacks (Ikelegbe, 2005). The region has also been bedeviled by insecurity problems stemming from the activities of different militant groups. The violence from the activities of these militant groups has turned the region into a theatre of war thereby compounding the nation's already bad security situation. It has also hindered the development of the region in particular despite its rich resource endowment and the Nigerian state in general (Akhemonkhan et al., 2012). The people of the oil rich Niger Delta communities have predicated their abject poverty, environmental degradation, and the general underdevelopment of their area on the economic marginalization and socio-political exclusion from revenue allocation by the federal government. These and many more led to the rise of different militant groups in the region.

It has to be stated that the problems in Niger Delta dates back to 1958 prior to independence, when the Willink's Commission concerned about the regrettable situation in the region, recommended the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) to tackle the problems of underdevelopment, yet nothing concrete was done because the headquarters of the commission was located in Lagos, far from the Niger Delta. In the 1990s, the government decided to prosecute people of the Niger Delta region most especially the entire Ogoni ethnic group who were at the forefront of the struggle. This led to the eventual execution of the environmental rights activist, Ken Saro-Wiwa and other eight Ogoni kinsmen.

In 1993, the Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (IBB) led federal government established the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) with the aim of getting to the heart of the problem, the agency however went moribund without success. Other agencies were also created such as the Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC) to develop the Niger Delta, but the agency due a number of factors, achieved little success (Omoweh, 2000; Raji, et al., 2000). In the Fourth Republic, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) created the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA) and even granting unconditional amnesty to militants but all these policies have not yielded the desired outcomes or produced the expected results as the activities of these militancy have continued to threaten national security.

The activities of these militant groups have threatened not only Nigeria's oil production, but also the country's economy, fragile democracy and national security. It is against this background that this study will assess the activities of the militant groups in the Niger Delta region and the challenge to national security in Nigeria. The study will be guided by following research questions: What factors led to the emergence of the militant groups in the Niger Delta region? What are the challenges posed by the activities of militant groups to Nigeria's national security? What are Government's responses to the national security challenges posed by militant groups?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent studies have attributed the prevalence of large-scale insecurity caused by militancy in many third world countries and developing nations to the abundance of natural resources, such as oil. Ross, (2004) linked the outbreak or prolonging of violent conflict in third world countries to abundant resource endowments which feed into corruption, struggles over resources, and political instability. The need for oil from endowed developing third world countries has contributed to the on-going conflict dynamics in oil bearing third world countries (Cramer, 1988). This is

because crude oil and its products are globally strategic; as they are the foundation of energy for modern civilization, and the fuel for modern industrialization.

Collier and Hoeffler (2000) and Ross (2004) identified oil-endowed developing countries as having a high risk of experiencing militancy leading to armed conflict. According to the resource curse perspective, conflicts in Angola (oil), Burma (tin, gems), DRC (copper), Sudan (oil), Indonesia (natural gas), Morocco (oil) and Nigeria (oil) can be attributed to the destabilizing and conflict element in the resource abundance-development linkage. Following from this, Ikelegbe (2006) present greed and opportunism as the motivating incentives for armed groups to engage in conflict. Ikelegbe (2006), also notes how economic interests fuel conflicts. By drawing from the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) on the case of a resource endowed country like Nigeria, he points out that foreign mining and mineral exploiting companies enter into partnership with state or non-state actors to have unhindered access into the legal or illegal trade of primary resource exploration and exploitation.

The problems of governance, educational attainment (the lack of it) and income levels are also identified by Oyefusi (2007) as the immediate cause of rise of militancy leading to armed conflict in resource-endowed countries, especially Nigeria. Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000) see the lack or absence of political and economic development as the root cause of conflicts (militancy) in the African continent. Ifeka (2000) on the other sees conflict, especially in the Niger Delta as the consequence or reflection of political repression and undemocratic practices by erstwhile military dictators. In this regard, Ikelegbe (2006) and Reno (2003) have rightly expressed the idea that a primary resource in/by itself does not engender conflict; rather it is the complex struggles by various classes, fractions and groups, local, national and international, with regard to the manner of extraction, management, appropriation and distribution of benefits that propel and fuel armed conflict.

To understand national security one must be able to evaluate the prevailing threat posed by militancy within a state. Threat situations are also dynamic and in many cases are sometimes politically determined (Ochoche, 1997). For years, the history of humankind was interfaced by search for the best way of ensuring the security of people, property, territories, states, institutions etc. Balogun, (2003) observed at a forum that “man’s primary and engaging concern has been that of survival and protection; from the vagaries of nature, natural disasters and from the ill-intentions and misdeeds of his fellow men”. This is amplified by section 14(b) of the Nigeria constitution (1999), which states inter alia that:

“The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government”. A secure nation is one that is able to protect and develop itself so that it can develop its core values, meet the needs of its people, and provide them with the right atmosphere for self-improvement”.

Therefore, threats to national security are not static, but dynamic, and just as the political, economic, military and social causes of threats change, so does the national security posture of a country change (Okodolor, 2004). In the context of Nigeria’s national security considerations, Former President Olusegun Obasanjo contends that:

The primary objective of national security shall be to strengthen the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to advance her interest and objectives to contain instability, control crime, eliminate corruption, enhance genuine development, progress and growth, and improve the welfare and well-being and quality of life of every citizen (Tyoden 2005).

In this sense, national security is a collection of two broad crucial elements: State security and Human security. It entails the preservation of the safety of Nigerians at home and abroad and the protection of the sovereignty of the country and the integrity of its assets (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2006). So therefore, a country is secured to the extent that the political leadership is able to anticipate, recognize and respond effectively to these threats, using the available national

resources to ensure the safety of life and property of the citizens, and guarantee the integrity of its territorial boundaries as well as its strategic assets, both within and outside its territory.

One thing that confronts Nigeria today is the resurgence of civil unrest and its threat to her security. The insecurity being caused by militants in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria is of great concerns to everybody because the region serves as the source of revenue to the Nigerian state. The problem is made worst by the inability of the Nigerian state to effectively address the security threat posed by MEND and other militancy. This has portrayed Nigeria as one of the most insecure place to live in the world today. Foreign investors have left in haste to neighbouring countries and her citizens are leaving the country on a daily basis. People are beginning to question the capability of government in addressing its security challenges in the 21st century.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 *The Relative Deprivation Theory*

Most sociologists used relative-deprivation theory within the early 1960s and 1970s. The theory, according to Ted Gurr (1970), argues that prolong poverty and marginalization within countries are breeding grounds for violent political movements and terrorism. The theory also contends that people often perceive themselves to be deprived in comparison with others. This perception creates hostility. The theory stresses psychological characteristics as the main reason why social movements emerge. Its claim is that people experience “relative deprivation” through meeting obstacles in life, such as economic and social, and that as a result of this, they often search for alternative goals in compensation, such as collective action. However, this does not mean that all discontent leads to social movements, or collective actions. But in most cases when the people are exposed to difficult life situations overtime, in spite of being richly endowed with natural resources they tend to take arms against the state or the perceived enemy to their progress. Proponents of this theory were fast to point out that for social discontent to translate into social movements, the people involved must feel that

they deserve, or have a right to more social welfare, be it resources, power or status, than they already had.

And often, they must also conclude that they would not attain their satisfactions via individual conventional methods. Therefore, the only viable option left would be “collective action”, which social movement organizations offer (Glock and Stack, 1965). Because of the increasing presence and popularity of social movements, which were increasingly cropping-up in the developing countries during the 1960s, this perspective almost achieved a position of monopoly, especially within sociology of religion (Furseth, 1999). More than most other theories, it seemed like the most suitable viable sociological explanation for the rise of militancy and the implications of their activities on national security.

This theory shows the nexus between the emergent of militancy and challenges to national security. MEND holds the FG and MNOCs accountable for the inability of communities in the Niger Delta to access sustainable livelihoods. They, therefore rebel against the perceived enemy (FG and MNOCs). Scholars generally agree that deprivation of livelihoods of the inhabitants of the Niger Delta by the multi-national oil companies through oil exploration and production, environmental degradation, perceived insensitivity of the state, and pollution of rivers and farmlands were the cause of the Niger Delta crisis (Agbibo and Maiangwa, 2013). Consequently, people whose main vocations are farming and fishing have been deprived of their primary means of earning a livelihood. These have led to various forms of violence and conflicts including arson, kidnapping, and vandalism of oil installation.

IV. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted the descriptive survey. Primary and Secondary data were collected and utilised. While Primary data was sourced from In-depth interviews conducted with stakeholders in Bayelsa, Rivers, and Delta States, Secondary data was sourced from published and unpublished sources. The types of primary and secondary data for this study include the under listed items:

- Evidence of factors that led to the emergence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria
- Evidence of the goals, ideology and membership composition of these groups in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.
- Evidence of the effect of the activities of these groups on National Security in the Nigeria.
- Evidence of government response to the activities of different militant groups in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

The sources of data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources involved in-depth interviews with stakeholders while secondary sources were a host of materials such as journals, books, archival documents, communicate, and documents from stakeholders on separatist agitations and national security. The Techniques for Data Gathering: Two major research techniques were employed in this study, namely, in-depth interview and documentary source of information. The major research instruments designed were:

- Checklist of questions for in-depth interviews;
- Checklist of documents that were collected.

In-depth Interviews were conducted with stakeholders at two realms: state and society from the following:

Table 1: Showing Stakeholders and Number of Interview conducted

Respondent	Interviews in Bayelsa	Interview in Delta state
MEND members	2	2
Niger Delta Development Commission	1	1
Security Agency	1	1
Traditional Rulers	1	1

CSOs	1	1
Academia	1	1
Total	8	8

Data Analysis Approach: The data collected from the field were content analysed according to the thematic areas.

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Causes of Separatist Agitation in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

The UNDP report (2006), the Niger Delta is now a place of frustrated expectations and deep-rooted mistrust. Though, the long years of neglect could be adduced for this, it has implanted in the community a mentality and feeling of hopelessness and eternal deprivation especially among women and youth. Due to these repression from the government over the ears, persistent violence has become the order as survival in the region is only by the fittest¹. Cajetan, (2008) stated that there is substantial evidence abound that oil exploration and production in the Niger Delta has resulted into different form of pollution (land, air, sea). The land in many places now yield little or no harvest; plants shrink and fade away because of gas flaring, many species of fishes have died due to water pollution. The fishermen in the Niger Delta have been made jobless due to oil spillage due to oil spoilage that has killed fishes and other toxic chemicals released into the environment; have also caused health problems like skin cancer. Socio-economic activities is now at the mercies of the oil companies and the government².

Paradoxically, the neglect of the Niger Delta region does not appear to be one sided because the resources accruing to the state by way of 13 percent derivation to oil-producing state does not seem to have been adequately channeled towards the development of the region by those who have

been in government in the area. Secondly, the establishment of Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB), OMPADEC and NDDC also appear not to have made any meaningful impact in the development of the area (Roberts, 1998). Hence, as earlier noted wide there is widespread poverty, lack of social and economic infrastructure and a high rate of employment and crime. This in turn has bred frustrated population, ethnic polarization and an anti-establishment hostility and agitation.

The irony of Nigeria's Niger Delta region is that the region is richly endowed with oil which should be a thing of joy, it is like paradise in hell. The people are one of the poorest sets of people in the world as the majority live in slums and shanties; unemployment is rife and illiteracy is prevalent³. Also, Aluko, (2004), in his study reported that 95.8% of the inhabitants of the Niger Delta are of the opinion "that oil exploitation and the environmental degradation that accompanied it, are largely responsible for their impoverishment which denied them of their primary source of livelihoods". The inability of the governments to translate earned oil revenue to sustainable growth and improved livelihood has festered the feeling of resentments among the inhabitants against the governments, resulting in violence and conflicts. This was echoed in an interview with one of the respondent from the region who stated that, "there is total failure of accountability and transparency in governance, and governments have failed to apply oil revenues to alleviate the sufferings of the people"⁴. Given these scenarios, it is easy to see why the people feel victimized and disenchanting and are willing to take to violence against the state at the slightest provocation (Herskovits, 2012). This correlates with the

¹ Interview with a staff of Niger Delta Development Commission in Delta State. (22/11/2020)

² Interview with Professor Ambily Etekepe, Director of Peace and Conflict Studies, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island (10/11/20202).

³ Interview with Chief Lucky Wiwa (The brother to the late Ken Saro Wiwa) (20/11/2020)

⁴ Interview with King Malala Sasime, a paramount ruler in Bayelsa 11/11/20202

relative deprivation theory of conflict used in this study.



Source: Nairaland, (2011) – *The Niger Delta in Pictures*, [online], January 17, 2011. Available from <http://www.nairaland.com/587622/niger-delta-pictures>

Figure 1: Shell Exploration Plant in Effurun, Delta State



Figure 2: Fire outbreak from oil spillage in Bayelsa

Nairaland, (2011) – *The Niger Delta in Pictures*, [online], January 17, 2011. Available from <http://www.nairaland.com/587622/niger-delta-pictures>.

The abuse of laws on environment by the Multi-National Oil Companies (MNOCs) leading to environmental pollution of the Niger Delta region. All peaceful efforts to make Shell and other oil companies compensate the communities fell on deaf hear. Instead of the Federal and state

government sanctioning them, they were rather protecting them and arresting human rights activist like Ken Saro-Wiwa who brought to the crime of these oil companies to the forefront. In one of the interview conducted with a member of the dreaded MEND who is presently into oil bunkering. He said “I be fisherman before, but now no fish again for the water because of the frequent oil spillages that have destroyed the water and kill fishes. Se I no go survive? Well, that’s why I join MEND. The Amnesty thing is just camouflage, we still do bunkery and the military are aware of it”⁵.

One of the major cause of separatist agitations in the Niger Delta is the problem of unemployment. No society thrives on unemployment and underemployment especially when it seems as if a particular group is marginalized. Such may be a reason for separatist agitation as any particular group or groups feeling that the government for political reasons deliberately sidelines them, may see secession as a way out⁶. Another cause is the problem of poor social amenities in the Niger Delta. Infrastructure is an index of development and people will not want to remain in a polity that seem to oppress by purposely not providing the basic. A group may agitate to separate where there is little or no physical presence of the government in their region. Where that exist, the loyalty of such a group to the state may become an issue which may give room for alienating itself from the state. These problems and many more led to the rise of militant groups in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria.

5.2 The Effects of Militant Activities on the National Security

The Nigeria state is richly endowed with lots of natural resources which should naturally aid its development but instead of helping in the development of the environment, exploration and exploitation of these resources particularly oil have led to vast degradation of the environment in the region where it is found (Aluko, 2004). Oil

exploration in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria is not restricted to only the rural areas or offshore but oil is also explored on the sea, land, in the rural and in the urban cities. The Nigeria Niger Delta environment is about the most grossly impacted by activities relating to oil Production chief of which are oil spills and gas flaring (Vermont Law Review, 2012). A CIA report published in the year 2000 and referred to as Douglas et al (2004), warned of the spill-over effects of environmental stress in the Niger Delta. World Wildlife Funds (2013) stated that oil and gas extraction and production could result in lasting damage to the environment due to the release of tons of harmful pollutants in the air, water, and land. According to Wayne (1971), the time it takes a contaminated environment to return to its original state can never be determined accurately.

⁵ Interview with member of MEND comrade Alisbi Kamalu (15/11/2020)

⁶ Interview with Chief Lucky Wiwa on 20/11/2020 (Immediate brother to the Late Ken Saro Wiwa)



Figure 3: Figure of Elf Oil Pollution site in Sagbama, Bayelsa.

Nairaland, (2011) – The Niger Delta in Pictures, [online], January 17, 2011. Available from <http://www.nairaland.com/587622/niger-delta-pictures>

Oil exploration and production are bound to have negative environmental effects in the area where they are being carried out the Niger Delta inclusive (Ugochukwu, 2008). The Vermont law review (2012), of the situation in the Niger Delta shows that over fifty years of explorative activities in the region has resulted in grave destruction of arable farmlands and productive waters. During oil exploration and production lot of untreated Effluents is release into surrounding water bodies. On the effect of oil exploration and production Corbett (1996), states that either the physical nature of oil or its chemical components can affect the water body or the organisms in it. The impacts of oil pollution on land could be as devastating as leading to the destruction of wildlife and biodiversity, loss of fertile lands, degradation of farmlands and contamination of underground waters.

The activities of SHELL spelt S H E L L if you remove the first letter S, you will have HELL. Their activities are causing us lots of pain. They have spoil our land and water. Many people have been made jobless because they were fishermen and the pollution from their activities have destroy the water. Today in the Niger Delta

anytime it rains we have black water, so tell me how you can have good crops⁷.

A similar view shared by both Ugochukwu (2008) and Lucy et.al (2011) stated that the impacts of oil pollution on the water make the water unsuitable for its other purposes including being a life support system for both man and animals. Essien and John (2010), for crops and plants to germinate, it requires a soil with adequate air, water and nutrient to support the growth of the plant, however, oil pollution in the Niger Delta of Nigeria reduces the productivity of soils by making the required air, water and nutrients unavailable. The pollution of the atmosphere in the Niger Delta due to gas flaring and other oil related activities is a major source of concern, as it is a major cause of environmental degradation in the region. Affirming this, the Vermont law review (2012) further stated that these flaring points in the Niger Delta area are always found close to places of residence and according to Alvarez and Paranhos (2012), exploration activities produce volatile gases which in areas of concentrated production could have substantial air quality effects. This proximity to homes according to Ugochukwu (2008) raises issues of human rights abuses and the need for efficient laws to control it in Nigeria. Potential Physical and health impacts of oil exploration in the Niger Delta causes acid

⁷ Interview with Chief Lucky Wiwa on 20/11/2020 (The Junior Brother of late Ken Saro Wiwa).

rain, cancer, birth defects, neurological problems, and other irreversible health effects.

The stubbornness on the part of the government to do the right thing instead of doing that they were busy bribing some people and coercing people in the region to be obedient. Today the Niger Delta is very polluted, you can put on a clean white clothes without it getting black in two hours because of air pollution⁸.

VI. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO NIGER DELTA CRISIS

The event unfolding in the Niger Delta, have been a source of concern to all Nigerians and the international communities. The Niger Delta region and oil remain the major driver of Nigeria's economy (Orbunde, 2012). The impacts of Militant activities in the Niger Delta, blown out of proportion due to the insensitivity various administrations and government to years of deprivation and neglect of the region cannot be overestimated. One of the respondent said the strategy of the government instead of solving the crisis in the Niger Delta, it's giving us more heat as the different strategy adopted by the government to manage the crisis have not achieved the desired outcome but have rather led to constant clashes between militants and various security outfits in Nigeria⁹. As enshrined in the 1999 constitution, it's the responsibility of the Nigerian state to protect the citizens both from external and internal aggression while also ensuring the protection of Multinational oil companies' businesses and properties.

The government which is responsible for the day to day running of the affairs of the state. One of its major functions is maintain law and order. The starting point for resolution of the Niger delta crisis was in the 1957 establishment of Henry Willink Commission to look into the fears of the minority in the Niger Delta. The commission acknowledge the total neglect of the Niger Delta and recommended that creations of the Niger

⁸ Prof Ambily Etekpe of Niger Delta University Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa state on 10/11/2020.

⁹ Interview with Wilberforce Golden of Ogoni Liberation Movement 20/11/2020

Delta development Board (NDDDB) to attend the specific development needs of the Niger Delta. However, the board headquarters was located in Lagos far away from the Niger Delta and was highly affected by inadequate funding by the government control by the three major ethnic groups¹⁰.

A turning however was the 1.5 percent fund and the presidential committee on the Development of Mineral Producing Areas. The 1.5 percent from the federation account was set aside for development of oil producing areas. The Federal government administered fund committee that was set up. The committee embark on identification and development of many projects. In 1992 the president then Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida established the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) to manage the development problems in the oil producing areas. OMPADEC achieved so much comared to agencies that was established before it but community needs preference were not reflected in the project identification and location (Roberts, 1998).

The first response from the government of Nigeria was military repression. This singular act of insensitivity cost the nation so much in terms of military spending of oil revenue. This constant clash has led to casualties both on both sides (the militants and the security outfits). Also, the cache of sophisticated arms and ammunition at the disposal of these militants is a source of worry, exposing the proliferation of the country's border and the inefficiency of different security agencies like the customs. When the government realized that military option can neither deter the militants nor bring peace to the region, on June 25, 2009, the government of late President Musa Yar' Adua granted unconditional amnesty to the militants.

The amnesty provision was that all militants should surrender all arms and ammunition in their possession within 60 days. The ex-militants were to receive N65, 000 stipends at the end of

¹⁰ Interview with Chief Luck Wiwa (The brother to late Ken Saro Wiwa). 20/11/2020

every month, while they undergo training at home and abroad to acquire skills in order to be employable and reintegrated into the civil society. This seems good and has almost abated the spate of militancy in the area but the several decades of neglect have created restiveness among various groups (Onigbinde, 2008). These crises which are the consequences of several years of exploitation, neglect and deliberate abandonment of the region which is the economic base of the nation by successive governments (federal, regional and states) have brought about militant agitations, protests, violent demonstrations, communal crisis, proliferation of arms, attack on oil and gas infrastructure and personnel, seizure of drilling rigs, and kidnapping of industry personnel, among others.

VII. THE IMPLICATION OF MEND ACTIVITIES ON NIGERIA NATIONAL SECURITY

A nation that is riddled with crisis of insecurity can hardly make progress. This is because genuine investors will be scared away from such counties. This has in large part become the burden of governments in Nigeria. The festering crisis in the Niger Delta has had negative consequences on the people of the region, the MNOCs, the government and even the international communities which partly on crude oil from Nigeria. Roberts, (2006) reported that the crisis have led to social, economic and political impacts with negative implications on development. The immediate consequences are deaths, destruction of properties and displacement of persons. Others are loss of lives, injury, wrongful arrest and detention, psychological trauma etc. the persistent crisis have created security problems that have discourage investors and threatened the national security. The foreign direct investor profile of Nigeria for the period 1990-2005 aptly reflects the dire economic consequences face by a nation is riddled with insecurity.

The activities of MEND with other militancy had lot of negative consequences on Nigeria. No wonder the United States for example in January 2012 warns its citizens of the potential risk of traveling to Nigeria and essentially, the need to

avoid all except important trips to the Niger Delta States of Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa and Akwa Ibom (U.S Department of State, 2012). This is because their well-coordinated attacks on oil installations and foreign expatriate and local oil workers sent a very damaging signals to the rest of the international community that Nigeria is not safe and secured place and as such, not sustainable to economic investments and activities. This created an alarming state of insecurity in the region. Usually when crisis occurs apart from loss of lives and properties, it also leads to capital, migration of people whether indigene or non-indigene in search a safer environment. Another effect is the increased militarization of the region as the government sends lots of armed forces to the region to maintain laws and order. This Soja way government they bring come Niger Delta, them they do like say dem be God. They do arrest people without clear evidence that the person has committed a crime, rape, kill, and commits lots of atrocities¹¹.

Furthermore, when the people are displaced, there is social dislocation of the going conditions of production in the conflict environment both in traditional and modern economies. By extension national security is affected. Roberts, (2006) also report that the security siege in the region also means that normal economic activities including oil production, have sometimes become impossible. For, instance between January and August, 1998, Shell installations in the eastern division of the Niger Delta alone were blocked 117 times, leading to a loss of about 11 billion barrels of crude oil estimated at US \$1.32 billion¹². The losses incurred by the oil companies have often forced them to declare force majeure. The loss of profitability by oil companies greatly affected the revenue accruing from the state from the federation account and excess crude account. This is because the federal government is largely dependent on the foreign exchange earnings from the petrol dollar. Once there is any crisis that affects that sector, the amount of money expected

¹¹ Interview with Chief Lucky Wiwa, the immediate junior brother of late ken Sarowiwa (20/11/2020)

¹² Notes from Niger Delta, Nigerian Tribune, May, 21, 1999, pp 11 and 22

by the federal government is also impacted. This is why the activities of MEND and other militant groups within the Niger delta gain international and local attention.

Furthermore, the activities of MEND are also having negative impacts on the reputations of Multi-Oil Companies. This is because agitations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria started as non-confrontational but have grown into full blown violent confrontations, attracting the interest of not only the MOCs and the Nigeria government but the world at large. The militants have particularly made as one of their main targets, oil installations and other facilities owned by multinational oil companies including their staff. Multinational oil companies suffer continuous aggression from militants and host communities due to what the latter refers to as the contribution of the MOCs to the degradation and poverty of the region, demanding the pulling of MONCs (Okoji, 2012).

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Governance Reform

The study found that the underdevelopment of the Niger Delta led to the emergence of militant groups in the region and their activities negatively affected the country's National Security. The reality of the sequence of this activities needs to be disentangled through the reform of governance at all level. The local government which is should be the closet to the grass root is virtually non-existent. There is also no synergy between the state and federal government as demonstrated in the activities of NDDC. The state and the federal government should also to reduce the level of wastefulness and increase the level of accountability and prudence. There must be very a strong and committed development leadership in the Niger Delta states, that will honestly execute the development programmes in their region within a specifies time frame; let the people aware of the time frame as to what and what they want to do and how soon they are going to do them. The national assembly should make laws that would fast track the development of the oil-rich region.

8.2 Review the Land Use Decree of 1978 and other laws on Land ownership

There is a need to review the present land ownership Laws to allow for private ownership of land and resources while Legislation should be made for such owner of land upon which resources are found to pay royalties to the federal government. This would help reduce the conflict between the government and the people on rights and ownership. The government can own the resources offshore while the people control their own lands with a royalty paid the government.

8.3 Reform of Laws and Institutions in the Petroleum Industry

The government through the National Assembly (Senate and Federal House of Representative) should scrapped retrogressive and obnoxious laws like the Petroleum Act that prevent the self-actualisation of the people of the Niger Delta. The government should also sign into law the Petroleum Industrial Bill (PIB) that will make the host communities also benefit from their natural resources endowment and reduces thereby reducing the perceived marginalization, corruption, poverty etc. in the Niger Delta. A bill to allow for an upward review of the 13% derivation allocation being paid to the oil producing States should be placed before the National Assembly; this would further empower the states to develop these degraded regions. The present Laws as it relates to oil production in Nigeria such as the Federal Environmental Protection Act (FEPA) and the Petroleum Act should be reviewed to incorporate the protection of the environment and human wellbeing in it. Stiffer penalties should be placed on damage to the environment unlike the present laws while also emphasizing compensation not prolonged beyond a certain period of time as obtained in developed Nations.

8.4 Restructure the Nigeria Federation

Since the return to democracy in 1999 there has been calls in different quarters for the government to restructure different aspect of the Nigerian federation as it's the only solution to managing the different crisis befalling the state. The

government should therefore take a cue from advance federation that are also oil producing and practicing true federalism so that the Niger Delta region and other states of the federation will have full opportunity to develop at their own pace. The different insecurity crisis affecting National Security will also be addressed through the practice of true federalism.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

What is therefore needed to maintain National Security and ensure peaceful co-existence is an all-inclusive system of governance that is devoid of favouritism and nepotism. The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) should be aware that whether a separatist group achieves its aims or not is largely determined by local and international politics which is the balance of interests and forces that extend beyond the state. It is based on this that the FGN is advised to use diplomatic/political means to resolve all forms of agitations in Nigeria other than the use of force.

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APPENDIX I

INDEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

Militancy in the Niger Delta and the Challenges of National Security in Nigeria

In-depth Interview Guide

1. Can you introduce yourself?
2. How long have you been in Niger Delta?
3. Did you relocate or you are an indigene of the Niger Delta?
4. How will describe the Niger Delta in terms of basic amenities and development compared to the resources available to the region?
5. What are the major problems in the Niger Delta?
6. Will you say these problems are responsible for the emergence of militant groups in the Niger Delta? If no, what are the cause of militancy in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?
7. What are the major effects of militant activities on:
 - i. Communities in the Niger Delta?
 - ii. The Multi-National Oil Corporation (MNOCs) in the Niger Delta
 - iii. The local, state and federal government of Nigeria?
 - iv. Finally, on Nigeria's National Security?
8. What are the effects of these problems on the people of Niger Delta and their economic well-being?
9. How will you describe government response to militant activities?
10. What is your advice on how to effectively manage militant activities and improve National Security?

Thank you