

## Militia Uprising and Arms Struggle in the Niger Delta

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### Abstract

This paper examined militia uprising and arms struggle in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria in order to ascertain the factors responsible and the actors involved in the conflict. The study adopted secondary sources of data and the basic human needs theory as its theoretical framework. The data obtained were analysed qualitatively. Findings revealed that unequal level of trade, alienation, marginalization of the indigenes of Niger Delta etc. help to increase the rate of uprising and arms struggle in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta region. To guarantee peace and sustainable development in the Niger Delta concerted effort should be made to review all existing policy actions with a view to charting a new course for the people of the region.

**Keywords:** *Militia uprising, Arms struggle, Niger Delta Region, Policies and programmes.*

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### **Background to the Study**

Uprisings and conflicts in the Niger Delta region can be traced to the pre-colonial era when the British authorities interfere in trade and economic activities in the Niger Delta region. Instances of such conflicts include the invasion of Benin Empire, the Akassa raid etc. which took place during the pre-colonial and colonial era hence, indicating that uprising and revolts in the Niger Delta has a long history. During the period, economic control of the resources in the area was a major source of disagreement. The situation continued even after independence in 1960 with the multinational oil companies dominating the oil and gas sector in Nigeria. Refusal to adhere to the demand of groups and organizations in the Niger Delta no doubt led to increased distrust between the Niger Delta people, the oil companies and the federal government thus, leading to constant protests and demonstrations including destruction of properties and oil installation facilities in the Niger Delta region. Minority revolts and uprising in the Niger Delta took a new dimension from 1999 – 2006 when arms struggle was introduced as part of the struggle in 1999 via the famous Kaiama Declaration. The consequent militarization of the Niger Delta also led to the proliferation of militant groups and camps across the Niger Delta. The nature of the Niger Delta conflict and the factors responsible for militia uprising and arms struggle in the oil-rich region forms the major thrust of this paper.

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Analysis**

In every study, theory and methodology play a major role in driving the process of any research to its logical conclusion. Thus, the need for an analytical framework in an investigation was reinforced by Lieber (1992), who contents that behind every concept or an analysis, there is a theory or view point, which make it possible for the presentation and interpretation of facts. Clearly therefore, for there to be reliability in an investigation, there is a need for scholars and researchers to come out with models, or the formulation of theories, for empirical theory seeks to create knowledge that is impersonal, retraceable and cumulative (Lieber, 1992, 12).

It is based on this background that this paper adopted the basic human needs theory in order to examine the subject-matter. Basic human needs scholars argued that certain basic human needs are fundamental and essential to the wellbeing of the individual and when these needs are not available, the human mind and body will not be at peace. The basic human needs theory posits that the absence of basic human needs such as shelter, water, food clothing, medical etc. can influence the conduct, attitude and character of the deprived individual towards crime and anti-social behaviour which can affect the society negatively. Burton (1997), also argued that when people are deprived or excluded from the decision-making process in any society, unending conflict will be the order of the day hence, he cautioned that the basic and essential needs of individuals be identified and given top priority in the decision-making process. According to Burton (1997), individuals are prepared to go to any height to defy governments, institutions and authorities in order to actualize their needs. The need for security, identity, recognition and self-actualization are crucial to the understanding of destructive social conflicts hence, failure by states and societies to recognise and satisfy such needs account for most community-based conflicts in Africa today. This theory is relevant to the study because prolonged neglect and alienation of the people by the oil multinational companies and the federal government accounts for the conflict and revolts in the Niger Delta. Policy measures that should address the

basic needs of the people have also failed to address the fundamental problems facing the people. The basic human needs theory as applied in this study clearly argued that understanding the basic needs and real causes of any conflict helps the state and the society to address or minimise such conflict with ease hence, it is imperative for conflict scholars to examine the fundamental drives of any conflict before making efforts to resolve them. Proponents of the basic human need's theory include: Burton (1997), Maslow (1943), Galtung (1969) and Six (1990).

### **Conceptual Analysis**

This section of the paper examined the opinions of scholars and researchers on the subject-matter. Nigeria's Niger Delta crisis can be linked to the pre-colonial and colonial era when legitimate trade replaced slave trade. It will be recalled that the 1884/1885 Berlin Conference which partitioned and bastardized African boundaries and territories in favour of colonial interest led to the influx of British Naval gun boats and merchants into the pre-colonial marginalization through trade and missionary activities and the signing of treaties which in turn compelled Niger Delta chiefs to transfer trade and the resources in the hinterland to the British colonial masters/agents. Failure or refusal to sign trade treaties led to the annexation of Lagos in 1861, dethronement and imposition of warrant chiefs in different part of the Niger Delta as well as other parts of the nation (Preboye, 2005:p.116). From when oil was discovered in 1956 at Oloibiri community in Ogbia local government area of Bayelsa state, the level of alienation of the Niger Delta people and other minorities in Nigeria became intensified and more sophisticated. IKporukpo (2011), captured the plight of the Niger Delta people when he stated thus:

*The Ogoni are embattled and imperilled since oil was discovered in the area in 1958, they have been the victims of deadly ecological war in which no blood is spilled, no bones are broken and no one is maimed. But people die all the time. Men, women and children are at risk, plant, wildlife and fish are destroyed, the air and water are poisoned and finally the land dies. Today, Ogoni has been reduced to a waste land (cited in Sarowiwa 1995, 131).*

While explaining the reasons for continuous agitation and protests in the Niger Delta Etekepe (2007), argued that certain policies of the Nigerian government has been a calculated attempt to perpetually undermine the Niger Delta and other minorities in Nigeria. According to him, even when federal development agencies and boards are set up for the Niger Delta, loyalists for destabilization (non-Niger Deltans) are appointed at the management level. He argued further that constituting development agencies/boards with members from non-oil producing communities/states as members was detrimental as such members or group will always work against the interest of the Niger Delta region and people. This development is no doubt responsible for the in-fighting and frequent dissolution of boards like the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). On the need to review and re-examine the laws and policies that constitute hindrance to minority ethnic groups in Nigeria, Prince Tony Momoh, stated that the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) and the Land Use Act will make it difficult for the Niger Delta people to manage their resources. In a publication captioned "No justice no peace in the Niger Delta" published in the Newswatch Magazine of August 4th 2008, Prince Tony

Momoh proposed that laws that denied the general population of the control of their resources ought to be investigated or revoked in order to reduce the hardship faced by the Niger Delta people. Arugu (2013) however contended that multinational oil companies have contributed to the growth and development of less developed countries but that their unethical practices designed for exploitation and profit maximization have also injured the economy of developing countries. Arugu (2013), listed the following as unethical practices carried out by multinational oil companies against their host communities: Gas flaring, environmental pollution, refusal to transfer technology/expertise, recapitalization through over invoicing, under invoicing, tax evasion and intrusion and interference in local politics etc.

### **Analysis Showing the Reasons for Militia Uprising and Arms Struggle in the Niger Delta Region**

Despite international pressure gas flaring by multinational oil companies in Nigeria still go on without regard for environmental and health related consequences. The data on gas flaring below clearly shows that the activities of multinational oil companies have further impoverished the people of Niger Delta who are often undercompensated whenever oil spills and pollution occur in the region.

**Table 1:** Flaring of Natural Gas in major Oil producing Countries (percent of gross production in 1991)

Country	% Flared
USA	0.6
Holland	0.0
Britain	4.3
Ex-USSR**	1.5
Mexico	5.1
OPEC Countries	
Nigeria	76.0
Libya	21.0
Saudi Arabia	20.0
Iran	19.0
Algeria	4.0
OPEC TOTAL	18.0
World Total	4.8

**Source:** Adapted from Defining an Environmental Development Strategy for the Niger Delta (vo. 1) World Bank Report, 1995:59).

**Table 2:** Perceived Causes of oil Spills in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria

Sample Location	Sample Size	Percentage Response			
		No. of Spills	Oil companies' carelessness	Sabotage	Both
Ogboloma (Elelebou)	30	0.0	86.7	3.3	10.0
Oporoma	30	0.0	76.7	0.0	23.0
Okwuzi	30	3.3	93.3	0.0	3.3
Afam-Ukwu	31	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
ObriKom	34	0.0	91.2	2.9	5.9
Aggregate for East	155	0.6	89.7	1.3	8.4
Afiesere	40	2.5	35.0	7.5	55.0
Olomoro	38	0.0	36.8	13.2	50.0
Oweh	42	0.0	19.0	0.0	81.0
Ozoro	41	0.0	26.8	14.6	58.5
Uzere	45	0.0	60.0	11.1	28.9
Aggregate for West	206	0.5	35.9	9.2	54.4
All locations	361	0.6	59.0	5.8	34.6

**Source:** C. O. Ikporukpo (1995, 28)

The exploitation of mineral resources in the Niger Delta region coupled with under assessment and under payment of compensation benefits by multinational oil companies and their Nigerian collaborators no doubt contributed to high level of poverty in the Niger Delta.

**Table 4:** List of Militant camps and commanders in the Niger Delta region as at 30th June 2009

S/N	Name of Camp	Location	Status of Camp	Leader(S)
1	Olugbobiri	Southern Ijaw (SILGA Bayelsa State)	Major	Joshua Mckiver
2	Korokorosei	SILGA Bayelsa State	Major	Africa Owei
3	Okiegbene/Ebrighbene (Ikebiri I and II)	SILGA Bayelsa State	Major	
4	Robert Creek	Nembe, Bayelsa State	Major	
5	Cowthorne Channel	Nembe, Bayelsa State	Major	
6	Camps	Warri South Delta State	Major	Government Ekpemupolo (Tompolo) and Henry Okah
7	Okerenkoko	Warri , Delta State	Major	
8	Opuraza	Warri, Delta State	Major	
9	Azuzuama	SILGA Bayelsa State	Major	Jackson
10	Gbekenegbene	SILGA Bayelsa State	Minor	Not available
11	Ezetu	SILGA Bayelsa State	Minor	Victor Ben Ebikabowei (Boyloaf)
12	Agge	SILGA Bayelsa State	Minor	
13	Kurutiye, Forupa and Okubie	SILGA Bayelsa State	Minor	Not available
14	Ken Camp	Odi, Bayelsa State	Minor	Ken
15	Egbema camp	Warri, Delta State	Minor	Kem Agbakara
16	Ubefan	Warri, Delta State	Minor	John Togo
17	Berger Camp	Warri, Delta State	Minor	IniloSinite
18	Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (UNFVF)	Akuku-Tori, Rivers State	Major	Alhaji Asari Dokubo
19	Niger Delta Volunteer Movement (NDVM)	Okirika, Rivers State	Major	Tom Ateke
20	Borokiri (Icelanders/Outlaw cult)	Borokiri, Port Harcourt, Rivers State	Minor	Soboma George
21	Yeghe	Bori, Ogoni, Rivers State	Minor	Solomon Ndigbara (Osama Bin Laden)

**Source:** Adapted from Etekpe, 2009.

**Table 4:** List of some hostage taking in Niger Delta area as at 13th March 2008

Month/Year	State Incident Occurred	No of Hostage Victims	Place of Hostage Taking	Parent/Subsidiary Coy Hostage Victim(S) Attached to	
October 2006	Akwa-Ibom	8	Near Eket	Bristol Helicopters Coy	
3 <sup>rd</sup> June, 2007	“	7 (one killed)	Ikot-Abasi	Aluminum smelter Coy of Nigeria	15
2003	Bayelsa	18	Middleton and Pennington Offshore Platform	Chevron Texaco	
Dec. 2004	“	1	Ekeremor	SPDC	
10 Jan. 2006	“	4	Offshore EA Oil Platform	SPDC	
July 2006	“	4	Ekeremor LGA	Trico Supply Coy Norwegian Shipping Firm	
June 2006	“	1	Gbarain Near Yenagoa	Westminster Dredging (International)	
June 2006	“	8	Ekeremor LGA	Peak Petroleum SPDC Contractors	
June 2006	“	24 (8 Military Officers Involved)	Ogboinbiri	Agip (NAOC) Flow Station	
Nov. 2006	“	2	Bilabiri	Norwegian Oil Service Coy	
7 <sup>th</sup> Dec. 2006	“	4	Twon-Brass (Terminal)	Agip (NAOC)	
10 <sup>th</sup> Jan. 2007	“	9	Ogu-Yenagoa	Daewoo Nig. Ltd	
24 <sup>th</sup> Jan. 2007	“	9	Sagbama	Chinese National Petroleum Coy (CNPC)	
March, 2007	“	2	Bayelsa	SETRACO NIG. LTD	
March, 2007	“	3	Koluama 1	EBEOBI NIG. LTD	
1 <sup>st</sup> May, 2007	“	6	Funiwa Oil Field	Chevron Nig. Ltd	
25 <sup>th</sup> May, 2007	“	10	Sangana AKASSA	Conoil	
June 2007	“	26 (Including Soldiers & Agip Workers)	Ogboinbiri	Nigerian Army & Agip (NAOC)	
July 2007	“	1 (over 70 yrs old woman)	Akaibiri, Yenagoa	Mother of Bayelsa State, Speaker	
31 <sup>st</sup> July, 2007	“	1 (2 yrsold child)	Yenagoa	Son of Governor's Office Staff	
August, 2007	“	1 (over 60 yrs old women)	Akassa	Mother of Bayelsa State House of Assembly Member	
August, 2007	“	1 (11 yrs old child)	Yenagoa	Son of a Female Member of Bayelsa State House of Assembly	
October, 2007	“	1 (over 80yrs old Chief of Odi Town)	Odi Town	Father of a Bayelsa State House of Assembly Member	
October, 2007	“	1 (over 70 yrs old woman)	Enewari Town	Mother of Hon. Member of Bayelsa State House of Assembly	
October, 2007	“	7 (3 Foreigners & 4 Nigerians)	Ekeremor (70 Miles from the Atlantic Ocean) E.A.Oil Platform	Shell (SPDC Facility)	
18 <sup>th</sup> Oct, 2007	“	1 (over 60 yrs old women)	Toru-Oruha, Sagbama L.G.A	Mother of House of Representative	
Dec. 2007	“	1 (Paramount Ruler of Aleibiri Town)	Aleibiri, Ekeremor L.G.A	Father of the Deputy Governor of Bayelsa State.	
Dec, 2007	BAYELSA	1 (91 yrs old man)	Bolou-Orua, Sagbama LG.A	Father of the Accountant General of Bayelsa State	147
1999	RIVERS	2	Ewhen Flow Station (Ahoada West)	Helicopter Pilots	
1999	“	1	Ebeolom – Abua	N/A	
1999	“	1	Night club G.R.A P.H	Tidex Nig. Ltd	
2005	“	1	Mbiama	Daewoo Nig. Ltd	
2006	“	2	Port Harcourt	Daewoo Nig. Ltd	
11 <sup>th</sup> May 2006	“	3	Rivers State Territory	Saipem (Agip Contractor)	

20 <sup>th</sup> June, 2006	“	2	Port Harcourt	Beaufort International
July 2006	“	1	Port Harcourt	Bilfinger Berger (B+B)
4 <sup>th</sup> Aug. 2006	“	3	Port Harcourt	N/A
9 <sup>th</sup> Aug. 2006	“	4	Port Harcourt	N/A
August 2006	“	2	Port Harcourt	International Dredging Coy
13 <sup>th</sup> Aug. 2006	“	4	Port Harcourt	B+B
16 <sup>th</sup> Aug. 2006	“	1	Port Harcourt	N/A
24 <sup>th</sup> Aug. 2006	“	1	Port Harcourt	Saipem
Oct. 2006	“	25	Cawthone Channel	SPDC-Contract Firm
22 <sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2006	“	50 Km off Coast Off	Eni SPA Subsidiary of Agip Oil Coy	
Jan 2007	“	5	Emohua, Rivers State	Sichuan Telecommunication Coy
Jan 2007	“	2	Rivers State	Nigerian Navy Officers
Jan 2007	“	2	Port Harcourt	Pivot G.I.S. Coy
Feb, 2007	“	1	Port Harcourt	Wife to an Iranian
17 <sup>th</sup> Feb. 2007	“	4	Port Harcourt	Missionaries
18 <sup>th</sup> Feb. 2007	“	3	Port Harcourt	Hydrodrive Coy
March, 2007	“	1	Port Harcourt	Julius Berger Plc
30 <sup>th</sup> April, 2007	“	1	Ubima, Rivers State	Gov. Celestine Omehia (Former) Mother
2 <sup>nd</sup> May, 2007	“	11	Ayama Rivers State	Daewoo Engineering & Construction Coy
May 2007	“	6	55 Miles Off The Coast of Rivers State	Eni SPA
5 <sup>th</sup> May, 2007	“	1	Port Harcourt	Beloroussian Women, Wife of a Nigerian from Akwa-Ibom State
19 <sup>th</sup> May, 2007	“	2	Port Harcourt	Petrochemical Firm
1 <sup>st</sup> June, 2007	“	7 (Two children & two women involved)	Port Harcourt	Indorama Petro Chemicals Firm
3 <sup>rd</sup> June, 2007	“	4	Port Harcourt	Schlumberger Coy
8 <sup>th</sup> June, 2007	“	1	Port Harcourt	Modant Marine Coy
June, 2007	“	3yrs old child (Master St. Micheal Steward)	Elekahia, Rivers State	In a Private Nursery School
4 <sup>th</sup> July, 2007	“	5 (2 Nigerian & 3 Foreigners)	Soku, Rivers State	SPDC
5 <sup>th</sup> July, 2007	“	3yrs old British child Margaret Hills	Port Harcourt	Briton
8 <sup>th</sup> July, 2007	“	2 Nigerian	Near Buguma Rivers State	SPDC Contractors
12 <sup>th</sup> July, 2007	“	3 yrs old Nigerian Child (Prince Samuel Amadi)	East-West Road, Port Harcourt	Ikwerre, Community (Son of a Royal Highness)
August, July, 2007	“	2	Port Harcourt	Engineering Firm Staff
August 2007	“	2	Port Harcourt	ADC Engineering Firm (MTN)
August, 2007	“	1	Port Harcourt	Hydro Dive company
Sept, 2007	“	1 (2 ½ yrs old child)	Akpajo-Elemo	Child of an NNPC Staff
Sept, 2007	“	4	Iwofe P.H	SAIPEM
Oct, 2007	“	1 (Pa Lawrence Kara)	Bane, (Ogoni Land), Rivers State	Father of the Deputy Speaker, Rivers State House of Assembly
24 <sup>th</sup> Oct, 2007	“	2 (6yrs old girl & 5yrs old boy)	Obi Wali Rd. P.H	Children of Elf Coy Staff
Dec. 2007	“	1	Port-Harcourt	Chairman of Rivers State Electoral Commission Prof. Nimi Briggs



8 <sup>th</sup> Jan. 2008	“	1 (10 yrs old child)	Port-Harcourt	Son of the State Secretary of P.D.P, Rivers State	
Jan. 2008	“	1	Agip Junction P.H.	Wife of assistant commissioner of police	
Feb. 2008	“	1	Port-Harcourt	Abonema Town	
Feb. 2008	“	1 (Wife of a Politician/ Business Mogul)	Port Harcourt	Vice Executive Chairman of Moni Pulo LTD	
Feb. 2008	“	1	Port Harcourt	Divisional Manager (Public Affairs) Agip	
25 <sup>th</sup> Feb. 2008	“	1	Peter Odili Road, P.H.	Deputy General Manager Total Drilling Company	
26 <sup>th</sup> Feb. 2008	“	2 children (2 yrs & 1yr old)	Port Harcourt	Pupils of University of Port Harcourt School	
Feb. 2008	“	1	Ada George Road Port Harcourt	PDP Chairmanship Aspirant	
5 <sup>th</sup> March, 2008	“	2 children of Former Chairman of Etche LGA)	GRA Phase2 port Harcourt	Pupils of Groove Nursery & Primary School	
March, 2008	“	1	Along East-West Rd. Construction Camp Site Rivers State	Expatriate Staff of Julius Berger	
10 <sup>th</sup> March, 2008	“	1 (6yrs old child)	D/line Port- Harcourt	Pupil of IBCF School Woji, Road Port Harcourt	
<sup>h</sup> March, 2008	“	6 persons	New Calabar Rivers	Workers of Julius Berger vessel/tugboat	156
18 <sup>th</sup> Feb. 2006	Delta	9	Riverine Area of Delta State	Wilbros Coy	
Jan. 2007	“	24	Chanomi Creek	Baco Liner Shipping Coy	
Jan 2007	“	7	Near Ankrankoko		
8 <sup>th</sup> May 2007	“	4	Okan Oil field	Global Off-Shore International (Chevron Nig. Ltd)	
May, 2007	“		Enerhen Junction Warri	Niger Cat (Oil Services Coy)	45

**Source:** The Atlantic Express Magazine volume 8 No. 1, 9<sup>th</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2008. E-mail: nigerdeltaaffairs@yahoo.com.

While confirming the fact that prolonged neglect and marginalization of the Niger Delta people in the decision-making process in Nigeria is responsible for the uprising and arms struggle in the region, Ibeanu (2008), captured the Niger Delta contradiction inside the setting of prosperity and burden clarifying how the abundance of a district has incomprehensively turned the instrument of abuse and neediness. According to him, the result of government inaction is youth anxiety, militancy, hostage taking, pipeline vandalism, oil burglary and different types of culpability and brutal showdown. The failure of the Nigerian state to address veritable requests of the general population in the range fortified a long time of conflicts and showdowns between a few youth gatherings and security agencies and also oil multinational oil companies. Also commenting on the economic impact of minority revolts and uprising in the Niger Delta, Ibeanu (2008) and Okonta (2005) stated thus: amidst 1999-2005, the nation (referring to Nigeria) witnessed high level losses in oil earnings due to agitations by citizens of Niger Delta and this affected the nation negatively. Table 5 below clearly shows that economic factors and the struggle for the control of trade in the Niger Delta hinterland was the major underlying factor responsible for uprising and arms struggle in pre-colonial and post-independence era in the Niger Delta region.

**Table 5:** Showing the nature of pre-colonial interaction between early Niger Delta leaders and the British colonial government/agents

S/N	Early Niger Delta Leaders	Nature/Purpose of interaction and the Colonial Agent Involved	End Result of the Interaction/ Transaction
1.	King Jaja of Opobo	Control of trade in the hinterland (Acting British Consul Harry Johnson).	Deportation, exile and the eventual death of king Jaja in the hands of his abductors.
2.	Nana Olomu of Itsekiri Kingdom	Control of trade in the Benin River (British Government).	Deportation and exile of Nana Olomu.
3.	King William Dappa Pepple of Bonny	Control of hinterland trade (British Merchants and British Consul Bee-Croft).	Deportation, exile and replacement with Prince Dappo Pepple (British Puppet) which marked the collapse of Bonny Monarchy.
4.	King Archibong of Old Calabar	Control of trade in the Qua-Ibo River (British Consul Bee-Croft).	Led to the death of King Archibong in 1852 and also marked the beginning of direct British control with British Consul Bee-Croft presiding over the election of a new king.
5.	Oba Ovonramwen of Benin Kingdom	Pursuance of British economic interest in the Benin and Ethiope River (Gallwey, British Vice Consul for the Benin-Ethiope River) and Acting Consul Phillip.	Arrest and detention of the Oba including the invasion and destruction of Benin Kingdom in 1897. The event also led to the bastardization of Benin culture and tradition and the massive looting of artifacts bronze plaques and other ornaments by the British invaders.
6.	King Koko of Brass	Introduction of harsh and unfriendly trade policies that excluded king Koko and the Akassa people by the Royal Niger Company and the British Government.	Led to the famous Akassa Raid of 29 <sup>th</sup> January, 1895 when the indigenous Akassa people shut down operations at the Royal Niger Company due to discriminatory trade policies which excluded the natives.

**Source:** Kalama Fieldwork 2020.

### Conclusion

The study investigated factors responsible for militia uprisings and arms struggle in Nigeria's Niger Delta region with a view to ascertaining the impact of such uprisings and arms struggle on the nation's economy and development. To critically appraise the subject-matter, the study adopted secondary sources of data and the basic human needs theory as the theoretical framework. Analysis was also done using the qualitative method. It was observed that uprisings and arms struggle in the Niger Delta region started during the pre-colonial and colonial era as a result of decades of marginalization and alienation of the Niger Delta people in the political and economic affairs of Nigeria. This development continued beyond the post-independence era and became more intensified from 1999-2008 hence, prompting the Nigerian government to adopt different approaches in dealing with the Niger Delta question. Findings from the study further revealed that the nonchalant attitude of oil multinational companies and the federal government no doubt helped to escalate the rate of uprisings and conflict in the Niger Delta region. Other factors responsible for militia uprisings and arms struggle in the Niger Delta include poor implementation of government policies and programmes and lack of sincerity and commitment on the part of multinational oil companies and the federal government.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings the following recommendations are hereby proposed:

1. There should be political reforms that should guarantee free and fair elections so that only committed and sincere leaders will emerge as leaders in the Niger Delta and Nigeria as a whole. This is important because committed and sincere leaders are currently lacking in the country hence the high level of underdevelopment at all levels in Nigeria.
2. Charity, they say begins at home hence; political leaders in the Niger Delta from the position of councillor, chairmen, state legislators, national legislators etc. should be held accountable and made to give account of their stewardship during and after their tenure. Such appraisals will compel leaders to be on their toes and be development conscious.
3. Community based conflict resolution frameworks should be encouraged to ensure sustainable peace and development in the region. In this way, the people especially community leaders and chiefs will be integrated in the entire process. The current system where development and peace proposals are imposed on the people from Abuja should be discarded.
4. It is imperative and fundamental that all previous Niger Delta committee/commission reports be collated and analysed with a view to implementing them without delay hence, the petroleum industry bill and other important development-oriented bills pending in the national assembly should also be given accelerated hearing in order to give minorities in Nigeria a sense of belonging.
5. There is urgent need to also review and re-evaluate the ongoing federal government amnesty programme in the Niger Delta region to ensure that the disarmament, demobilization and re-integration (DDR) exercise truly transform and rehabilitate ex-combatants and agitators back to the civil society as productive and resourceful citizens.
6. All outdated policies and laws that encourage inequality and retrogression in Nigeria should be repealed or discarded without further delay. In the same vein, multinational oil companies who fail to perform their social corporate responsibilities should be sanctioned and their oil prospecting license revoked.
7. The issue of environmental justice for communities in the Niger Delta should be given top priority while the clean-up of Ogoni land and other impacted communities should be done as directed by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) report.
8. It is imperative to also demilitarize the Niger Delta region by withdrawing all military task forces from the Niger Delta region. It is on record that Operation Delta Safe and Operation Crocodile Smile are currently operating in the Niger Delta region, causing more violence and human rights abuses in the region daily. Such actions will set a new agenda for peace in the region based on non-violent principles.

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