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# From Surveillance to Peace-Building: Examining the Changing Role of Tantita Security Services in the Niger Delta

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## Abstract

This study examines the evolving role of Tantita Security Services in the Niger Delta, transitioning from conventional pipeline surveillance to broader peace-building initiatives. Guided by Hybrid Security Governance theory and complemented by Positive Peace theory, the study investigates how private security operations interact with communities, state institutions and conflict dynamics to enhance security and social stability. A mixed-methods design was adopted, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative insights. Primary data were collected from 400 respondents across eighteen strategically selected communities in six Local Government Areas of Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States, with a 98% retrieval rate (392 completed questionnaires), alongside relevant secondary sources. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages. Findings indicate that 85.2% of respondents perceived regular Tantita surveillance, 82.7% reported reduced oil theft and 66.5% observed decreased community tensions. Qualitative findings further highlighted the importance of transparency, community engagement and collaboration with traditional leaders in improving security and peace-building outcomes. Based on these findings, the study recommends sustaining surveillance operations, strengthening trust-building initiatives, integrating community development programmes and promoting multi-stakeholder collaboration. The study contributes to knowledge by demonstrating that private security operations can support peace-building when combined with community participation, institutional support and socio-economic interventions, thereby providing a practical framework for sustainable security governance in conflict-prone resource environments.

**Keywords:** *Tantita Security Services, Private security, Surveillance, Peace-building, Niger Delta, Hybrid security governance, Oil theft*

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**Background of the Study**

Nigeria is one of Africa's leading oil-producing countries, with the Niger Delta serving as the center of its petroleum economy. Despite its strategic importance, the region has remained characterized by environmental degradation, oil theft, pipeline vandalism and socio-economic marginalization (Esuefa & Odoemene, 2024). Illegal bunkering and pipeline sabotage over the years have caused severe economic losses and environmental damage, while also undermining local livelihoods and human security (NEITI, 2013; Eze et al., 2023). Conventional state-led security responses involving the military and other security agencies have achieved limited success, as oil theft gradually evolved into an organized economic activity tied to local survival structures and long-standing grievances in the region (Onuoha, 2007; Omeje, 2016). Contemporary security scholarship therefore increasingly argues that security governance in fragile environments extends beyond the state and often involves hybrid collaborations between public institutions, private actors and local communities (Boege et al., 2009; Abrahamsen & Williams, 2011).

It was within this context that the Nigerian government engaged Tantita Security Services Nigeria Limited in 2022 to strengthen pipeline surveillance and combat oil theft in the Niger Delta. While the company's initial role focused on intelligence gathering and anti-bunkering operations, emerging evidence indicates that its activities have expanded into community engagement, youth employment and peace-oriented interventions across Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States (Nwoke et al., 2024; Independent Nigeria, 2025). Through local recruitment and community-based initiatives, Tantita increasingly appears to function not only as a surveillance contractor but also as a peace-building actor within host communities. However regardless of growing public attention surrounding the company's operations, there is limited empirical and scholarly research examining this transition from surveillance to peace-building within the broader framework of security governance and positive peace. It is against this background that this study examines the changing role of Tantita Security Services in the Niger Delta.

**Statement of the Problem**

Oil theft, pipeline vandalism and illegal bunkering have remained persistent security and developmental challenges in the Niger Delta despite decades of militarized interventions and institutional reforms (NEITI, 2013; Esuefa & Odoemene, 2024). These activities have contributed to revenue losses, environmental pollution, unemployment, insecurity and strained relations between host communities and state security institutions (Ephraim-Emmanuel et al., 2023; Terhemba, 2024). Although the Nigerian government has introduced several measures to address these challenges, many state-led responses have focused mainly on coercive enforcement and have failed to produce sustainable peace or long-term community trust (Onuoha, 2007; Omeje, 2016).

The engagement of Tantita Security Services Nigeria Limited by the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) introduced a new dimension to pipeline protection through the involvement of an indigenous private security actor. Beyond surveillance and anti-bunkering activities, Tantita has increasingly engaged in community relations, youth

employment and local development initiatives that suggest a broader peace-building role (Nwoke et al., 2024). However existing literature pays limited attention to how private security companies contribute to peace-building outcomes within oil-producing communities. Most studies focus on oil theft, militancy and state security responses, while the evolving role of private security actors in promoting trust, conflict reduction and community stability remains underexplored. This study therefore seeks to fill this gap by critically examining the changing role of Tantita Security Services from surveillance operations to peace-building engagement in Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States.

**Research Questions**

This study is guided by the following research questions:

i. How has the operational role of Tantita Security Services evolved from conventional pipeline surveillance to broader peace-building functions in the Niger Delta?
ii. In what ways have Tantita Security Services' operations influenced security outcomes and community stability in the Niger Delta?
iii. How do host communities and local stakeholders perceive Tantita Security Services' contribution to peace-building, trust-building and socio-economic inclusion in the Niger Delta?
iv. What institutional, socio-political and governance factors shape the effectiveness and sustainability of private security-led peace-building initiatives in the Niger Delta?

**Literature review & theoretical framework**

**Oil Pipeline Surveillance in the Niger Delta**

Oil pipeline surveillance in the Niger Delta developed as a response to persistent crude oil theft, pipeline vandalism and militant activities linked to environmental degradation and socio-economic marginalization in the region (Watts, 2008; Obi, 2010). Initially dominated by state security agencies and military operations, surveillance strategies proved largely ineffective due to difficult terrain, weak community trust and the growing sophistication of illegal bunkering networks (Omeje, 2016). Following the 2009 Presidential Amnesty Programme, the Nigerian government increasingly adopted hybrid surveillance arrangements involving private security contractors and community-linked actors to improve local intelligence gathering and infrastructure protection (SDN, 2019). Pipeline surveillance consequently evolved beyond technical monitoring into a broader system of negotiated security involving state agencies, private actors and local communities.



**Source:** https://africaoilgasreport.com/2016/09



**Source:** https://oilfieldafricareview.com/



**Source:** https://thenationonlineng.net/paradox-of-oil

**Source:** https://www.icirnigeria.org/oil-theftfg-approv

**Plate 1**: Photo showing Oil Pipeline surveillance a-ctivities in the Niger Delta

Recent studies show that pipeline surveillance in the Niger Delta combines human intelligence, community collaboration and technological tools such as drones, CCTV systems and pressure-monitoring devices (Oluwatosin et al., 2020). However, scholars argue that surveillance effectiveness depends more on local legitimacy and cooperation than on technology alone (Omeje, 2016). Despite contributing to temporary reductions in vandalism and oil theft, surveillance operations continue to face major governance and accountability challenges, including opacity in contract allocation, weak oversight and unequal distribution of surveillance-related benefits (Anderson & Page, 2017; SDN, 2019). Thus, pipeline surveillance in the Niger Delta remains embedded within a wider political economy shaped by insecurity, patronage and contested legitimacy.

**Private Security Companies in Oil Pipeline Surveillance**

The growing involvement of private security companies (PSCs) in oil pipeline protection reflects a global shift from state-centered security systems toward hybrid security governance in resource-conflict environments (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2011). PSCs emerged prominently in the Niger Delta after the limitations of militarized state responses became evident and crude oil theft continued despite government interventions. These companies provide surveillance, intelligence gathering and community liaison functions aimed at protecting critical oil infrastructure and stabilizing oil production (SDN, 2019; Nwoke et al., 2024). Unlike conventional security agencies, PSCs rely heavily on local knowledge, informal networks and community cooperation, making surveillance a socially embedded process rather than purely a technical exercise.

Although PSCs have contributed to short-term reductions in pipeline vandalism and illegal bunkering, scholars raise concerns regarding transparency, accountability and governance (Anderson & Page, 2017). Surveillance contracts are often classified as security-sensitive, limiting public scrutiny and creating opportunities for patronage and political manipulation (SDN, 2019). The selective distribution of surveillance jobs and benefits can generate exclusion and inter-group tensions within host communities (Watts, 2008). While private security companies have become central actors in Niger Delta security governance, their long-term contribution to peace and stability remains dependent on transparency, community trust and broader socio-economic reforms.

**Tantita Security Services Nigeria Limited and the Transformation from Surveillance to Peace-Building in the Niger Delta**




**Plate 2**: A Photo of the Tantita Security Services' Surveillance company in the creak
**Source:** https://guardian.ng/news/group-lauds-tantitas-role-in-pipeline-security-improved

Tantita Security Services Nigeria Limited was established in 2022 as part of Nigeria's intensified efforts to combat crude oil theft and pipeline vandalism in the Niger Delta. The company was contracted to conduct pipeline surveillance and collaborate with state security agencies in protecting critical oil infrastructure across Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States (Esuefa & Odoemene, 2024). Tantita operationally combines physical patrols, intelligence networks and technological surveillance tools to monitor pipeline corridors and disrupt illegal bunkering activities (Nwoke et al., 2024). Its emergence reflects the broader shift toward hybrid security governance in Nigeria, where private security actors increasingly complement state institutions in addressing complex security challenges.

Tantita's beyond conventional surveillance functions operations have gradually expanded into community engagement, youth employment and socio-economic interventions. Through the recruitment of local youths and support for community development initiatives, the company has contributed to reducing incentives for participation in illegal oil-related activities while promoting local cooperation around pipeline protection (Benjamin, 2024). Initiatives such as youth empowerment and skills development projects further suggest an emerging peace-building orientation consistent with positive peace frameworks that emphasize social inclusion and structural stability (Galtung, 1969). However regardless of these gains, concerns remain regarding transparency, accountability and the sustainability of private security-led peace-building in the Niger Delta (SDN, 2019). Tantita therefore represents both the possibilities and contradictions of hybrid security governance within fragile extractive environments.

**Peace-Building in the Niger Delta**

Peace-building emerged as a response to the limitations of militarized and violence-centered approaches to conflict management. Galtung (1969) argued that sustainable peace extends beyond the absence of violence to include social justice, institutional legitimacy and equitable

socio-economic structures, which he described as positive peace. Later scholars such as Lederach (1997) expanded this perspective by emphasizing peace-building as a long-term process involving conflict transformation, reconciliation and community participation. Within the Niger Delta, these ideas are highly relevant because the region's conflicts are rooted in environmental degradation, political marginalization, unemployment and unequal resource distribution (Ukiwo, 2010; Watts, 2008). Peace-building in the region requires more than military intervention; it demands inclusive governance, socio-economic empowerment and trust-building among communities, the state and security actors.

Attempts to address insecurity in the Niger Delta through militarized responses often intensified distrust and violence, as seen in several state security operations across the region (Oluyemi, 2020). Although programmes such as the Presidential Amnesty Programme contributed to temporary reductions in militancy, they failed to fully address the structural causes of conflict (Eti et al., 2024). Contemporary peace-building approaches therefore emphasize youth reintegration, community participation, environmental remediation and institutional legitimacy as essential components of sustainable peace. Peace-building provides the conceptual link between surveillance operations and long-term stability in examining how security interventions can contribute to trust, inclusion and positive peace in host communities.

**Peace-Building Indicators in Resource-Conflict Settings**

Peace-building in resource-conflict settings is commonly assessed through measurable social, institutional and relational outcomes rather than merely the absence of violence (Galtung, 1969; Lederach, 1997). Major indicators of peace-building include trust-building, youth reintegration, conflict reduction and institutional legitimacy. Trust-building reflects improved cooperation and willingness of communities to engage with security actors, especially in regions historically characterized by mistrust and coercive security operations (Watts, 2007; Brown & Ogele, 2025). Youth reintegration is equally significant because unemployment and social exclusion have historically pushed many young people into militancy, illegal bunkering and pipeline vandalism (Asuni, 2009). Employment opportunities, skills acquisition and community development programmes are considered important indicators of sustainable peace.

Another important indicator is conflict reduction, reflected in declining cases of pipeline vandalism, armed confrontation and community-security tensions (Esuefa & Odoemene, 2024). However, scholars caution that reductions in violence alone do not automatically signify genuine peace if underlying grievances remain unresolved (Galtung, 1969). Institutional legitimacy also remains central to peace-building, particularly in hybrid security environments involving state agencies, private security firms and community actors. Institutions perceived as transparent, accountable and community-oriented are more likely to gain public trust and sustain peace over time (Boege et al., 2009; Nwoke et al., 2024). Together, these indicators provide a multidimensional framework for assessing peace-building outcomes in the Niger Delta.

**Critical Assessment of Tantita's Peace-Building Impact: Successes and Contradictions**




**Plate 3**: A Critical Assessment of Tantita's Peace-Building Impact
**Source:** Author's conceptual synthesis based on existing literature (2025).

Tantita Security Services has attracted significant attention in the Niger Delta due to its reported contribution to reducing oil theft and improving pipeline surveillance. Reports from the oil sector indicate that enhanced surveillance operations and localized intelligence gathering contributed to reductions in illegal refining activities and improvements in crude oil production levels (Esuefa & Odoemene, 2024; Ebiaridor, 2024). The company's local recruitment strategy and youth employment initiatives have created economic opportunities for host communities, helping to reduce participation in illegal bunkering and pipeline vandalism (Benjamin, 2024). Community-oriented projects and youth empowerment programmes further suggest an attempt to connect security provision with social inclusion and development, which aligns with positive peace principles emphasizing livelihood support and social stability (Galtung, 1969).

Several contradictions regardless of these achievements continue to shape debates around Tantita's peace-building role. Scholars argue that pipeline surveillance contracts in Nigeria often operate within opaque governance structures characterized by weak accountability and political patronage (Anderson & Page, 2017; SDN, 2019). Critics also note that the uneven distribution of surveillance-related employment and benefits may create exclusion and inter-community tensions rather than fully resolving insecurity (Watts, 2008). While Tantita's interventions may contribute to temporary stability, they do not directly address deeper structural issues such as environmental degradation, poverty and long-standing grievances in the Niger Delta (Obi, 2010; Omeje, 2016). The company's peace-building impact remains both significant and contested, reflecting the broader complexities of hybrid security governance in resource-conflict environments.

**Oil Theft, Illegal Bunkering, and Pipeline Vandalism in the Niger Delta**



**Plate 4**: A photo representing Oil theft as a threat to Nigeria
**Source:** https://www.thisdaylive.com/2024/07/02/oil-theft-as-clear-threat-to-nigerias

Oil theft, illegal bunkering and pipeline vandalism remain major security and economic challenges in the Niger Delta. The phenomenon intensified from the 1990s alongside growing militancy, unemployment and resource control struggles within oil-producing communities (Katsouris & Sayne, 2013). The Niger Delta's difficult terrain, extensive pipeline networks and weak governance structures have made oil infrastructure highly vulnerable to sabotage and illegal crude oil extraction. Scholars identify three major forms of oil theft in the region: artisanal refining involving small-scale local operations; industrial-scale theft through illegal pipeline tapping; and large syndicate-based operations involving political and industry insiders (Asuni, 2009; Okoli & Nwokolo, 2025). These activities have contributed to massive economic losses, declining crude oil production and persistent insecurity across the region.



**Plate 5**: A Photo representing artisanal or small-scale theft in the Niger Delta
**Source:** https://businessday.ng/energy/article/nigerian-oil-thieves-risk-fire-explosions-to-tap



**Plate 6:** A photo of an attachment of illegal valves tapping to pipelines
**Source:** https://businesspost.ng/economy/nigeria-cuts-crude-losses-to-16-year-low

Oil theft and illegal bunkering beyond economic losses have produced severe environmental and social consequences. Oil spills and artisanal refining activities continue to pollute rivers, farmlands and mangrove ecosystems, undermining fishing and farming livelihoods while exposing communities to serious health risks (UNEP, 2011; Izuchukwu, 2022). The activities have also contributed to arms proliferation, youth violence and criminal networks within many Niger Delta communities (SDN, 2013). Scholars largely attribute the persistence of oil theft to unemployment, poverty, corruption, weak regulation and exclusion from oil benefits (Watts, 2007; Katsouris & Sayne, 2013). The literature views oil theft not merely as criminality, but as a structural outcome of governance failure, economic marginalization and environmental injustice in the Niger Delta.



**Source:** https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Expanse-of-mangroves-degraded-by-oil-spills



**Source:** https://www.popsci.com/environment/illegal-oil-refining-issues-nigeria/?



**Source:** https://sdn.ngo/sdn-report-communities-not-criminals-illegal-oil-refining-in-the
**Plate 7:** Environmental Devastation from Oil Theft and Illegal Refining in the Niger Delta

**Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on Hybrid Security Governance and Positive Peace theories to explain the changing role of Tantita Security Services in the Niger Delta. Hybrid Security Governance provides the primary analytical framework by explaining security as a collaborative process involving state agencies, private security actors and host communities rather than the exclusive responsibility of the state (Boege et al., 2009; Baker, 2010). The theory is particularly relevant to the Niger Delta where security challenges surrounding oil theft and pipeline vandalism have increasingly required cooperation between government security agencies, private surveillance contractors and local communities. Through this framework, Tantita Security Services is

understood as a hybrid security actor whose effectiveness depends not only on surveillance capacity but also on local legitimacy, trust and community collaboration.

The study further adopts Positive Peace theory to assess whether surveillance activities contribute to broader peace-building outcomes beyond the reduction of oil theft. Positive Peace emphasizes the presence of social justice, inclusion, trust and institutional legitimacy as foundations for sustainable peace rather than merely the absence of violence (Galtung, 1969; Lederach, 1997). The theory helps explain how security interventions such as local recruitment, youth engagement and community-based surveillance may contribute to conflict reduction, social stability and improved relations between communities and security actors. Both theories provide a complementary framework for understanding how surveillance practices in the Niger Delta can evolve into mechanisms that support security, legitimacy and long-term peace-building.

**Methodology**

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design involving both quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the changing role of Tantita Security Services from surveillance-oriented security operations to broader peace-building engagement in the Niger Delta. Primary data were obtained through the administration of structured questionnaires to respondents across selected oil-producing communities in Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States, while secondary data were sourced from books, journal articles, government publications, policy reports and institutional documents relating to oil theft, pipeline surveillance, private security governance and peace-building in the Niger Delta. The population of the study comprised community residents, youth groups, community leaders, security personnel and other stakeholders connected to oil infrastructure protection and peace-building processes within the selected study areas. A multi-stage purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting three states, six Local Government Areas and eighteen oil-bearing communities considered relevant to surveillance activities and oil-related conflicts. Using Yamane's formula, a sample size of 400 respondents was determined for the study. Data were collected through direct field administration of questionnaires, while the instrument was subjected to face and content validation and tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha. Data generated from the field were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Frequency counts and simple percentages were used to present and interpret the data.

**Results**

**Table 1:** Sex Distribution of Respondents

| Gender | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 255 | 65.1 |
| Female | 137 | 34.9 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2025).

Table 1 shows the sex distribution of respondents. The results indicate that 65.1% of the respondents were male, while 34.9% were female. This distribution reflects a higher level of male participation in the study. The predominance of male respondents is not unexpected, given the nature of the study area and subject matter, which centers on oil pipeline surveillance, security operations and peace-building activities sectors traditionally dominated by male participation in the Niger Delta context.

**Table 2:** Age Group of Respondents

| Options | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| 18–29 | 96 | 24.5 |
| 30–39 | 125 | 31.9 |
| 40–49 | 94 | 24.0 |
| 50 and above | 77 | 19.0 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2025).

Table 2 presents the age distribution of respondents. The findings show that 31.9% of the respondents fall within the 30–39 age group, representing the largest proportion of participants in the study. This is followed by respondents aged 18–29 years, who constitute 24.5% and those aged 40–49 years, accounting for 24.0% of the total respondents. Participants aged 50 years and above represent 19.0% of the sample.

**Table 3:** State of Respondents

| Options | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Bayelsa | 150 | 38.3 |
| Delta | 120 | 30.6 |
| Rivers | 122 | 31.1 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2025).

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents by state of residence. The results indicate that 38.3% of respondents are from Bayelsa State, making it the most represented state in the study. This is followed by Rivers State, which accounts for 31.1%, while 30.6% of respondents are from Delta State. The relatively balanced distribution across the three states suggests that the study achieved broad geographical coverage within the core oil-producing areas of the Niger Delta.

**Table 4:** State of Respondents

| Options | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Southern Ijaw | 82 | 20.9 |
| Ekeremor | 68 | 17.3 |
| Warri South-West | 67 | 17.1 |
| Bomadi | 53 | 13.5 |
| Okrika | 61 | 15.6 |
| Degema | 61 | 15.6 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2025).

Table 4 presents the distribution of respondents across the selected Local Government Areas. The results show that 20.9% of respondents are from Southern Ijaw Local Government Area, making it the most represented LGA in the study. This is followed by Ekeremor (17.3%) and Warri South-West (17.1%), which together account for a significant proportion of respondents. Okrika and Degema each constitute 15.6% of the respondents, while Bomadi records the lowest representation at 13.5%.

**Table 5:** Educational Level of Respondents

| Options | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| No Formal Education | 32 | 8.2 |
| Primary Education | 97 | 24.7 |
| Secondary Education | 161 | 41.1 |
| Tertiary Education | 83 | 21.2 |
| Postgraduate Education | 19 | 4.8 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2025).

Table 5 shows the educational attainment of respondents. The findings indicate that 41.1% of respondents possess secondary education, representing the largest educational category in the study. This is followed by respondents with primary education (24.7%) and those with tertiary education (21.2%). A smaller proportion of respondents reported having no formal education (8.2%), while 4.8% possess postgraduate qualifications.

**Table 6:** Occupational Distribution of Respondents

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Surveillance Staff | 38 | 9.7 |
| Community Leader | 28 | 7.1 |
| Security Agent | 19 | 4.8 |
| Trader | 112 | 28.6 |
| Fisherman / Farmer | 98 | 25.0 |
| Bunkery worker | 35 | 8.9 |
| Civil Servant / Health Worker / Teacher | 62 | 15.8 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 6 presents the occupational distribution of respondents. The results indicate that traders constitute the largest occupational group, accounting for 28.6% of respondents, followed by fishermen and farmers who represent 25.0%. These two groups together form more than half of the respondents, reflecting the dominance of livelihood activities directly linked to the riverine and oil-bearing economy of the Niger Delta. Respondents classified as civil servants, health workers and teachers account for 15.8%, indicating the inclusion of public-sector and social service perspectives in the study.

**Table 7:** Length of Respondents

| Options | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 5 year | 50 | 12.8 |
| 5–10 years | 72 | 18.4 |
| 11–20 years | 118 | 30.1 |
| Over 20 years | 152 | 38.7 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 7 shows the length of residence of respondents in their respective communities. The findings reveal that 38.7% of respondents have lived in their communities for over 20 years, while 30.1% have resided there for between 11 and 20 years. These groups account for 68.8% of respondents, indicating that the majority possess long-term familiarity with local security conditions, oil-related conflicts and community–state relations. Respondents with 5–10 years of residence constitute 18.4%, whereas those who have lived in the community for less than 5 years account for 12.8%.

**Table 8:** Before the involvement of private surveillance, oil theft was common in this community.

| Options | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 332 | 84.7 |
| No | 39 | 9.9 |
| Not sure | 21 | 5.4 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 8 presents respondents' views on the prevalence of oil theft prior to the involvement of private surveillance operators. The results show that 84.7% of respondents affirmed that oil theft was common in their communities before private surveillance, indicating a widespread acknowledgment of oil theft as a dominant security challenge in the Niger Delta. Only 9.9% of respondents disagreed, while 5.4% were uncertain. The overwhelming majority response suggests that oil theft was a normalized and persistent activity prior to the introduction of private surveillance arrangements, thereby establishing a strong baseline for assessing subsequent security interventions.

**Oil Theft, Insecurity and Surveillance Context**

**Table 9:** Illegal bunkering activities negatively affected livelihoods in this community.

| Options | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 302 | 77.0 |
| No | 61 | 15.6 |
| Not sure | 29 | 7.4 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 9 examines whether illegal bunkering activities negatively affected livelihoods in the study communities. The findings indicate that 77.0% of respondents reported that illegal bunkering had adverse effects on livelihoods, underscoring the socio-economic costs associated with oil theft and related activities. In contrast 15.6% of respondents indicated that livelihoods were not negatively affected, while 7.4% expressed uncertainty. The dominance of affirmative responses highlights the extent to which illegal bunkering disrupted fishing, farming, trading and other local economic activities, reinforcing the link between oil theft and community-level economic insecurity.

**Table 10:** Pipeline vandalism previously caused frequent environmental damage here.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 335 | 85.5 |
| No | 36 | 9.2 |
| Not sure | 21 | 5.3 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 10 focuses on the environmental consequences of pipeline vandalism prior to private surveillance involvement. The results reveal that 85.5% of respondents confirmed that pipeline vandalism caused frequent environmental damage, reflecting the severity of oil spills, pollution and ecological degradation in the Niger Delta. Only 9.2% of respondents disagreed, while 5.3% were unsure.

**Table 11:** Government security agencies alone were effective in preventing oil theft.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 68 | 17.3 |
| No | 265 | 67.6 |
| Not sure | 59 | 15.1 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 11 examines respondents' perceptions of the effectiveness of government security agencies acting alone in preventing oil theft prior to the introduction of private surveillance. The results indicate that a substantial majority, 67.6% of respondents, disagreed that government security agencies were effective on their own. Only 17.3% of respondents believed that government agencies alone were effective, while 15.1% expressed uncertainty.

**Tantita Security Services and Surveillance Operations**

**Table 12:** Tantita Security Services conducts regular surveillance activities in this area.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 162 | 41.3 |
| Agree | 172 | 43.9 |
| Neutral | 15 | 3.8 |
| Disagree | 28 | 7.1 |
| Strong Disagree | 15 | 3.8 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 12 presents respondents' assessments of the regularity of Tantita Security Services' surveillance activities within their communities. The findings show that 41.3% of respondents

strongly agreed, while 43.9% agreed, that Tantita conducts regular surveillance operations. The combined 85.2% of respondents affirmed the consistent presence of Tantita's surveillance activities, indicating a high level of operational visibility. In contrast 7.1% disagreed and 3.8% strongly disagreed, while 3.8% remained neutral.

**Table 13:** Tantita's surveillance presence has reduced visible oil theft activities

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 148 | 37.8 |
| Agree | 176 | 44.9 |
| Neutral | 13 | 3.3 |
| Disagree | 34 | 8.7 |
| Strong Disagree | 21 | 5.4 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 13 assesses whether Tantita's surveillance presence has led to a reduction in visible oil theft activities. The results reveal that 37.8% of respondents strongly agreed and 44.9% agreed that oil theft had reduced following Tantita's involvement. So, 82.7% of respondents perceived a reduction in visible oil theft, indicating a strong positive assessment of surveillance outcomes. Only 8.7% disagreed and 5.4% strongly disagreed, while 3.3% of respondents remained neutral.

**Table 14:** Pipeline vandalism has reduced since Tantita began operations.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 139 | 35.5 |
| Agree | 147 | 37.5 |
| Neutral | 49 | 12.5 |
| Disagree | 35 | 8.9 |
| Strong Disagree | 22 | 5.6 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 14 examines respondents' perceptions of changes in pipeline vandalism following the commencement of Tantita Security Services' operations. The results show that 35.5% of respondents strongly agreed and 37.5% agreed that pipeline vandalism has reduced, giving a combined affirmative response of 73.0%. 8.9% disagreed and 5.6% strongly disagreed, totaling 14.5% who perceived no reduction, while 12.5% of respondents remained neutral.

**Table 15:** Security around oil facilities has improved since Tantita's involvement

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 164 | 41.8 |
| Agree | 172 | 43.9 |
| Neutral | 10 | 2.6 |
| Disagree | 27 | 6.9 |
| Strong Disagree | 19 | 4.8 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 15 assesses whether security conditions around oil facilities have improved since Tantita's involvement. The findings reveal that 41.8% of respondents strongly agreed and 43.9% agreed that security has improved, resulting in a combined 85.7% positive assessment. Only 6.9% disagreed and 4.8% strongly disagreed, while 2.6% remained neutral.

**Table 16:** Tantita responds quickly to security threats in this community.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 133 | 33.9 |
| Agree | 182 | 46.4 |
| Neutral | 17 | 4.3 |
| Disagree | 36 | 9.2 |
| Strong Disagree | 24 | 6.1 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 16 evaluates the perceived responsiveness of Tantita Security Services to security threats within host communities. The results indicate that 33.9% of respondents strongly agreed and 46.4% agreed that Tantita responds quickly to security threats, amounting to 80.3% positive responses. 9.2% disagreed and 6.1% strongly disagreed, while 4.3% expressed neutrality.

**Table 17:** Community members now feel safer around oil infrastructure.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 101 | 25.8 |
| Agree | 129 | 32.9 |
| Neutral | 35 | 8.9 |
| Disagree | 85 | 21.7 |
| Strong Disagree | 43 | 11.0 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

From Table 17, it can be observed that a majority of respondents perceive an improvement in safety around oil infrastructure since the commencement of Tantita's operations. 32.9% of respondents agree and 25.8% strongly agree that they feel safer, indicating that 58.7% of the community has a positive perception of safety. 21.7% disagree and 11.0% strongly disagree, suggesting that 32.7% of the respondents still do not feel safe. The remaining 8.9% are neutral, neither affirming nor rejecting the statement.

**Community Trust and Security Legitimacy**

**Table 18:** Tantita operatives interact respectfully with community members.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 106 | 27.0 |
| Agree | 112 | 28.6 |
| Neutral | 15 | 3.8 |
| Disagree | 99 | 25.3 |
| Strong Disagree | 60 | 15.3 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 18 indicates that the community's perception of Tantita operatives' conduct is more divided. About 27.0% strongly agree and 28.6% agree that operatives interact respectfully, totaling 55.6% positive responses. However, a notable proportion, 25.3% disagree and 15.3% strongly disagree, totaling 40.6% negative responses, perceive the operatives' interaction as disrespectful. Only 3.8% are neutral.

**Table 19:** Tantita employs people from this community.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 217 | 55.4 |
| No | 97 | 24.7 |
| Not sure | 78 | 19.9 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

From Table 19, it is evident that a majority of respondents (55.4%) affirm that Tantita employs individuals from the community, reflecting a positive local employment impact. Meanwhile, 24.7% of respondents indicate that Tantita does not employ community members and 19.9% are not sure about the company's employment practices.

**Table 20:** Community members are willing to share security information with Tantita.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 101 | 25.8 |
| Agree | 136 | 34.7 |
| Neutral | 17 | 4.3 |
| Disagree | 73 | 18.6 |
| Strong Disagree | 65 | 16.6 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 20 shows that 60.5% of respondents, 25.8% strongly agree and 34.7% agree, are willing to share security information with Tantita. While in contrast 35.2%, 18.6% disagree and 16.6% strongly disagree are reluctant to do so, while only 4.3% are neutral.

**Table 21:** Tantita is perceived as more trustworthy than previous security actors.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 108 | 27.6 |
| Agree | 126 | 32.1 |
| Neutral | 11 | 2.8 |
| Disagree | 90 | 23.0 |
| Strong Disagree | 57 | 14.5 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

From Table 21, it can be observed that a majority of respondents 27.6% strongly agree and 32.1% agree, which is totaling 59.7% perceive Tantita as more trustworthy than previous security actors. 37.5% of respondents, 23.0% disagree and 14.5% strongly disagree do not view Tantita as more trustworthy, while 2.8% are neutral. The data from Table 21 suggest that Tantita has largely succeeded in gaining community trust relative to previous security actors, reflecting positively on its reputation and operational legitimacy.

**Table 22:** Tantita's presence has reduced fear between security operatives and residents.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 100 | 25.5 |
| Agree | 111 | 28.3 |
| Neutral | 18 | 4.6 |
| Disagree | 101 | 25.8 |
| Strong Disagree | 62 | 15.8 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 22 indicates that a slight majority of respondents 25.5% strongly agree and 28.3% agree, totaling 53.8% believe that Tantita's presence has reduced fear between security operatives and residents. Then 41.6% of respondents 25.8% disagree and 15.8% strongly disagree perceive no reduction in fear, while 4.6% are neutral.

**Peace-Building Outcomes**

**Table 23:** Tantita's activities have reduced violent conflicts in this community.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 102 | 26.0 |
| Agree | 119 | 30.4 |
| Neutral | 13 | 3.3 |
| Disagree | 98 | 25.0 |
| Strong Disagree | 60 | 15.3 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 23 presents respondents' perceptions of whether Tantita Security Services' activities have contributed to a reduction in violent conflicts within their communities. The findings indicate that 26.0% of respondents strongly agreed and 30.4% agreed with the statement, producing a combined affirmative response of 56.4%. This suggests that a majority of respondents perceive Tantita's operations as having a positive impact on reducing violent conflict in their communities. However, a substantial proportion of respondents expressed contrary views. 25.0% disagreed and 15.3% strongly disagreed, totaling 40.3% who did not perceive a reduction in violent conflict attributable to Tantita's activities. Then 3.3% of respondents remained neutral, indicating uncertainty or mixed experiences regarding conflict outcomes.

**Table 24:** Youth involvement in oil theft has reduced since Tantita's operations began.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 104 | 26.5 |
| Agree | 141 | 36.0 |
| Neutral | 19 | 4.8 |
| Disagree | 84 | 21.4 |
| Strong Disagree | 44 | 11.2 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 24 examines respondents' perceptions regarding whether youth involvement in oil theft has reduced since the commencement of Tantita Security Services' operations. The results show that 26.5% of respondents strongly agreed and 36.0% agreed, yielding a combined positive response of 62.5%. This indicates that a clear majority of respondents perceive a reduction in youth participation in oil theft following Tantita's intervention. 21.4% of

respondents disagreed and 11.2% strongly disagreed, accounting for 32.6% who did not share this perception. A further 4.8% of respondents were neutral, suggesting uncertainty or limited direct observation of changes in youth behavior.

**Table 25:** Tantita has contributed to youth employment or engagement in this area.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 106 | 27.0 |
| Agree | 128 | 32.7 |
| Neutral | 17 | 4.3 |
| Disagree | 80 | 20.4 |
| Strong Disagree | 61 | 15.6 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 25 presents respondents' views on whether Tantita Security Services has contributed to youth employment or engagement within the study area. The findings indicate that 27.0% of respondents strongly agreed and 32.7% agreed, resulting in a combined affirmative response of 59.7%. This suggests that a majority of respondents associate Tantita's operations with improved opportunities for youth employment or engagement. 20.4% disagreed and 15.6% strongly disagreed, totaling 36.0% who did not perceive such contributions. 4.3% of respondents remained neutral.

**Table 26:** Relations between youths and security actors have improved.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 98 | 25.0 |
| Agree | 121 | 30.9 |
| Neutral | 31 | 7.9 |
| Disagree | 76 | 19.4 |
| Strong Disagree | 66 | 16.8 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 26 assesses whether relations between youths and security actors have improved since the involvement of Tantita Security Services. The data reveal that 25.0% of respondents strongly agreed and 30.9% agreed, giving a combined positive response of 55.9%. This indicates that over half of the respondents perceive an improvement in youth–security relations. 19.4% disagreed and 16.8% strongly disagreed, amounting to 36.2% of respondents who did not perceive improved relations. A further 7.9% of respondents were neutral, reflecting ambivalence or mixed experiences.

**Table 27:** Community tensions related to oil activities have reduced.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 115 | 29.3 |
| Agree | 146 | 37.2 |
| Neutral | 13 | 3.3 |
| Disagree | 73 | 18.6 |
| Strong Disagree | 45 | 11.5 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 27 presents respondents' perceptions regarding whether community tensions related to oil activities have reduced following the involvement of Tantita Security Services. The findings indicate that 29.3% of respondents strongly agreed and 37.2% agreed, producing a combined affirmative response of 66.5%. This demonstrates that a substantial majority of respondents perceive a reduction in oil-related community tensions since Tantita's intervention. On the contrary, 18.6% of respondents disagreed and 11.5% strongly disagreed, amounting to 30.1% who did not share this perception. A small proportion of respondents (3.3%) remained neutral.

**Table 28:** Tantita contributes to community development or social initiatives.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 94 | 24.0 |
| Agree | 132 | 33.7 |
| Neutral | 14 | 3.6 |
| Disagree | 93 | 23.7 |
| Strong Disagree | 59 | 15.0 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 28 assesses respondents' views on whether Tantita contributes to community development or social initiatives. The results reveal that 24.0% of respondents strongly agreed and 33.7% agreed, yielding a combined positive response of 57.7%. This indicates that more than half of the respondents associate Tantita's presence with some level of community development or social investment. 23.7% of respondents disagreed and 15.0% strongly disagreed, totaling 38.7% who did not perceive such contributions. A further 3.6% of respondents were neutral.

**Table 29:** Tantita's presence supports long-term peace in this community.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 70 | 17.9 |
| Agree | 97 | 24.7 |
| Neutral | 17 | 4.3 |
| Disagree | 120 | 30.6 |
| Strong Disagree | 84 | 21.4 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 29 examines whether Tantita's presence supports long-term peace within host communities. The results show that 17.9% of respondents strongly agreed and 24.7% agreed, resulting in a combined affirmative response of 42.6%. This indicates that fewer than half of the respondents perceive Tantita's presence as supportive of long-term peace. 30.6% of respondents disagreed and 21.4% strongly disagreed, amounting to 52.0% who did not believe that Tantita's presence guarantees sustainable peace. 4.3% of respondents were neutral.

**Table 30:** Government support influences Tantita's effectiveness.

| **Option** | **Number of respondents** | **Percentage (%)** |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 126 | 32.1 |
| Agree | 158 | 40.3 |
| Neutral | 12 | 3.1 |
| Disagree | 51 | 13.0 |
| Strong Disagree | 45 | 11.5 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

The results in Table 30 indicate that a substantial majority of respondents perceive government support as influencing the effectiveness of Tantita Security Services. 72.4% of respondents 32.1% strongly agree and 40.3% agree that government involvement positively affects Tantita's operations. A small proportion of respondents were neutral 3.1% while 24.5%, 13.0% disagreed and 11.5% strongly disagreed and did not perceive government support as impactful.

**Institutional And Governance Factors**

**Table 31:** Collaboration between Tantita and community leaders is important.

| Educational Level | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 174 | 44.4 |
| Agree | 146 | 37.2 |
| Neutral | 19 | 4.8 |
| Disagree | 33 | 8.4 |
| Strong Disagree | 20 | 5.1 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 31 examines respondents' perceptions regarding the importance of collaboration between Tantita Security Services and community leaders. The results show that 44.4% of respondents strongly agreed and 37.2% agreed, yielding a combined affirmative response of 81.6%. This overwhelming majority indicates a strong consensus that collaboration with community leadership is a critical factor in the effectiveness and legitimacy of Tantita's operations. 8.4% of respondents disagreed and 5.1% strongly disagreed, amounting to 13.5% who did not consider such collaboration important, while 4.8% remained neutral.

**Table 32:** Political interference affects security operations negatively.

| Educational Level | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 131 | 33.4 |
| Agree | 152 | 38.8 |
| Neutral | 16 | 4.1 |
| Disagree | 59 | 15.1 |
| Strong Disagree | 34 | 8.7 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 32 assesses respondents' views on whether political interference negatively affects security operations. The findings indicate that 33.4% of respondents strongly agreed and 38.8% agreed, producing a combined agreement level of 72.2%. This suggests that a substantial majority perceive political interference as a significant constraint on effective security delivery. 15.1% of respondents disagreed and 8.7% strongly disagreed, totaling 23.8%, while 4.1% expressed neutrality.

**Table 33:** Transparency improves acceptance of private security operations.

| Educational Level | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 162 | 41.3 |
| Agree | 150 | 38.3 |
| Neutral | 14 | 3.6 |
| Disagree | 43 | 11.0 |
| Strong Disagree | 23 | 5.9 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 33 presents respondents' opinions on whether transparency improves acceptance of private security operations. The data show that 41.3% of respondents strongly agreed and 38.3% agreed, resulting in a combined positive response of 79.6%. This strong endorsement indicates that transparency is widely viewed as a key driver of community acceptance and legitimacy for private security actors such as Tantita. On the other hand, 11.0% of respondents disagreed and 5.9% strongly disagreed, accounting for 16.9%, while 3.6% remained neutral.

**Table 34:** Peace-building efforts should involve both security actors and communities.

| Educational Level | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 171 | 43.6 |
| Agree | 180 | 45.9 |
| Neutral | 6 | 1.5 |
| Disagree | 19 | 4.8 |
| Strong Disagree | 16 | 4.1 |
| Total | 392 | 100.0 |

**Source:** Authors field survey (2026).

Table 34 evaluates respondents' perceptions of whether peace-building efforts should involve both security actors and communities. The findings reveal that 43.6% of respondents strongly agreed and 45.9% agreed, yielding an exceptionally high combined agreement of 89.5%. This near-unanimous support demonstrates a strong belief in inclusive, multi-actor approaches to peace-building. Only 4.8% disagreed and 4.1% strongly disagreed, totaling 8.9%, while 1.5% of respondents were neutral.

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings of this study show that oil theft, pipeline vandalism and insecurity were major challenges in the Niger Delta prior to the operations of Tantita Security Services. Respondents largely perceived conventional government security agencies as ineffective, supporting earlier studies which argue that state-centered and militarized approaches have struggled to address oil-related insecurity in the region (Watts, 2008; Obi, 2010). This situation created the need for alternative security arrangements involving private and community-based actors. The findings further reveal that respondents generally viewed Tantita's surveillance operations as

effective in reducing visible oil theft, improving surveillance around oil facilities and enhancing overall security conditions. These outcomes support hybrid security governance arguments that private security actors can complement weak state capacity in conflict-prone environments (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2011).

The study also found that community trust and peace-building outcomes associated with Tantita's operations were moderate but significant. Many respondents acknowledged improvements in youth engagement, reductions in violent conflicts and better relations between communities and security actors. This aligns with peace-building literature emphasizing that livelihood support, community participation and inclusion contribute to social stabilization and conflict reduction (Galtung, 1969; Lederach, 1997). The persistence of skeptical responses indicates that legitimacy and trust remain uneven across communities where concerns about transparency, accountability and political interference persist (Baker, 2010; Meagher, 2012). The findings suggest that Tantita Security Services contributes meaningfully to security improvement and peace-building in the Niger Delta, although sustainable peace ultimately depends on broader governance reforms, institutional accountability and socio-economic development beyond surveillance operations alone.

**Conclusions**

This study concludes that Tantita Security Services has contributed significantly to improving pipeline security and reducing oil theft in host communities across the Niger Delta. The findings show that effective surveillance operations, community engagement and local participation have positively influenced perceptions of security improvement and peace-building outcomes. However the study also reveals that sustainable peace and security cannot rely on surveillance alone, as issues of trust, legitimacy, transparency and socio-economic inclusion remain important. The study therefore concludes that while private security actors such as Tantita can complement state security efforts, long-term peace and stability in the Niger Delta depend on collaborative governance, community support and broader developmental interventions.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, there is a need to strengthen and sustain surveillance operations through improved coordination between Tantita Security Services, government security agencies and host communities in the Niger Delta. Greater emphasis should be placed on community engagement, transparency and local participation in security processes in order to improve trust, legitimacy and cooperation. Regular consultation with community leaders, increased youth employment and the expansion of community-based development initiatives such as skills acquisition and empowerment programmes will further help reduce the socio-economic conditions that drive oil theft and insecurity. Security interventions should be integrated with broader governance and developmental strategies, including environmental remediation, accountability mechanisms and institutional support, since long-term peace and stability in the Niger Delta depend not only on surveillance and enforcement but also on inclusive development and sustainable community relations.

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