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## **Niger Delta Armed Struggle and Contemporary Wider Security Threats in Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

*This article focus on the Siamese struggles by Niger Deltans for the restoration of the environment that is degraded by oil related activities and for fairness in the allotment of revenue generated from the sales of the oil, the perennial armed struggle that ensued in the region and the contemporary wider security threat in Nigeria. The study adopts historical approach as qualitative method was applied in the analysis of data generated through secondary sources and it was found that the struggles have implications on overall national security in Nigeria, as it has created conditions for civil insurrection which has led to death of many persons and destruction of vital national properties in the Niger Delta and beyond, such as the MEND Commando attack on the Atlas Cove Jetty in Lagos on July 13, 2009 and car bombing on the event of national day celebration in Abuja. Again those terror tactics engaged by the Niger Delta militants such as armed struggle and kidnapping, have contagious effects and have assumed national dimensions as it has been widely adopted by agitators and criminal elements across the regions in Nigeria to the extent that they now pose serious internal national security threat to the nation. Effective resolution of the security threat should be dependent upon addressing proactively the underlying factors, which necessitated the upsurge of militia's in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** armed struggle, contemporary, Niger Delta, perennial, Security, threat

### **Introduction**

The Niger Deltans are people found in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, administratively known as South South, one of the six Geopolitical regions in Nigeria, housing states such as Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross Rivers, Delta, Edo and Rivers. The region is naturally rich in biodiversities, which the over 31million people (NBS, 2011 estimates) constantly relied upon to survive. Under its soil are huge deposits of natural gas and petroleum such as Brent Crude, Sweet Bonny –light that rank among the best quality of crude oil in the world, which the Larger Nigeria people constantly relied on to survive, as it provide the major income and source of foreign exchange to the Nigerian Government, which is monthly shared on the one hand between the Federal, State and the Local Government on the ratio of 52.68%,

26.72% and 20.60%, respectively and on the other hand among the 36 states of federation on the basis of equality, population, land mass amongst other criteria, through the office the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC Report, 2017). Ironically, while the larger Nigeria shared the benefits that come from the petroleum revenue generated in the Niger Delta, the environment cost that is associated with the oil exploitation is burnt only by the people of the region.

Meanwhile, before granting self-rule to Nigeria as well as at the beginning of commercial oil exploitation in the Niger Delta, the colonial government understood and took earlier steps to solve the peculiar issues of difficult terrain, poverty, protection of minority rights as well as pollution associated with oil exploration in the region. The Willink Commission and laws such as the Pipeline Act 1956, were created to tackle the problems, respectively (Orubu, 2000). They were amongst the structures inherited by postcolonial governments in Nigeria. To ensure equity and fairness in national income sharing, the early post-colonial government adopted the derivation principle which appears in the 1960 and the 1963 constitutions, to safeguard the marine environment the Oil in Navigable Water Act was promulgated in 1968, to safeguard the atmosphere the Associate Gas Re-injection Act 1979, was promulgated and of course to protect the entire environment section 20 of the 1999 Constitution was enacted, and however to dispossess the Niger Deltans the right to derivation, the Petroleum Drilling and Production Regulation Act 1969, was promulgated.

By provisions of these laws, especially the Petroleum Drilling and Production Regulation Act 1969, the Federal Government took over the ownership and control of oil mineral resources, while in the others, the Petroleum industries were obliged not to pollute and in any case when pollution occurs, they should take prompt steps to control, if possible end it and indemnify those affected (Yinka, 2001, p 24). The Niger people were not given any role in all of these. Although in response to their request for even development with regard to issues of difficult terrain and marginalization, the government created special interventionist agencies, such as the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB), while with regard to addressing the issue of poverty associated with environmental degradation and unfavorable distribution of oil revenue, the Oil Mineral Producing Area's Development Commission (OMPADEC), established the derivation principle in which 13% of the oil revenue in the Federation Account is allocated to the states governments in the region, was introduced and the establishment of another interventionist agency known as the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in 2000.

Yet, the environment and living conditions of communities where the oil is exploited is a misery tale according to Akukwe (2001, p 1) of unparalleled proportions, as they are also denied the benefits that accrued from the oil. The absence of workable moral and legal mechanisms to deal with the distribution of the oil revenue and with the ecological damage and provide compensation for the environmental devastation, provides basis for protests and subsequently armed

struggle that pose internal security threat in the region and beyond. But despite the seeming lull between 2009 and 2014, having benefitted from the amnesty programme of the Government, the armed struggle resurfaced since late 2014 with activity of the Avenger that has blown up major export pipeline at any provocation. Their demands prominently include restitution for environmental damage wrought by the oil industry and greater control over oil revenues. Meanwhile, the Federal government move to assuage the region has generated a spiral claim of marginalization and exclusion, especially by the people of the Northern and Eastern regions, respectively, which have equally resumed agitation.

Thus, while the twin issues of environmental effects of oil Production and the demand for greater share of the revenue from the commodity are known, very little time is taken to examine their roles in crisis situation in the region and the implications on the overall internal security of the Nation. While no time is taken to examine the link, it appeared that oil production in the region of the Nigeria Delta, with its attendant problems have created another round of problem, linked to internal security for Nigeria, such as kidnapping and terrorism which was fallout of the Niger Delta crisis, has taken another dimension. Almost on daily basis we hear incidence of kidnapping reported in newspapers, the crisis has created a kind of armed struggle and kidnapping for ransom hitherto unknown in the history of Nigeria. Unlike the civil war it has given rise to a whole lot of criminality or criminal activities disguise as part of the struggle for environmental justice and equality in the exploitation, management and devolution of national income derived from oil. It is against this backdrop that this article examined the organic linkage between the issues of environmental injustice, political marginalization/ economic deprivation, armed struggle in the Niger Delta and the wider national security threat in contemporary Nigeria.

### **National Security: Conceptual and Applied Discourse**

The concept security means to protect something of interest from attack (Chamber, 1996, p1269). At the level of individual it means ensuring safety against threats to human survival and wellbeing. This includes freedom from poverty, diseases, environmental degradation, violence attack and oppression. Then at collective levels in organized setting like the state with features as defined geographical space, people, sovereignty and organization as government, for example as Nigeria, security means the protection of human life, properties and other valuable things such as the environment, a common pool resources that is significant for human existence; rivers, forest, air and micro-organism that are of common interest to the survival of the nation, against internal or external threat.

Broadly speaking, there are two perspectives to security discourse, namely the realist and the liberal perspectives. The realist perspective stresses the military

capabilities a state has to defend itself against external invasion. This perspective views the state as practical provider of security, just as is presumed that the primary obligation of the state to guarantee and defend its borders against external attack which is predicated upon national power (Asogwa and Okafor, 2016 p24). The main deficiency of this perspective according Asogwa and Okafor is its narrow view of the practice of security, as it was viewed only in terms of national effort to deal with external attack, ignoring threats that arise from the domestic environment and factors that result to that, thus the call for paradigm shift from this narrow view to a much wider conception of security was awakened, otherwise known as the liberal perspective.

According to Turcotte (2002) cited in Okafor et al (2001, p104) since the end of the cold war, field of security have been expanded to incorporate the notion of security beyond the threat of interstate warfare. Security concerns since then have included protection against issues of poverty, disease and environmental factors (UNCHS, 2003). In this sense, national security is no longer limited to the conventional meaning of maintaining territorial integrity against external attack but entails state, for instance Nigeria ability to advance her interests, to control instability, control crime, ensure protection of environment, eliminate corruption, improve the welfare and quality of her citizens, including economic and trade. This prompts Asogwa and Okafor, 2016 p24 to say that human security which is an aspect of the liberal perspective is supported, as they claimed that:

By the fact that instances of interstate war have decreased drastically while factors like diseases, poverty, violence and state sponsored abuse of human rights have posed new challenges to human liberties and freedom in the state.

The foregoing assertion is a liberal view of security, is in congruence with Aristotle's view about National security interest which he claimed the essence was to ensure good life. While Locke (1689) in his social contract theory postulated that the great ends of man uniting into commonwealth and putting themselves under government is "the preservation of their lives, liberties and estate". This view corroborates section 14 of the national Constitution, 1999 which stated that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government. The State placed priority on the environment in section 20 where she stated that: *the state (nation) shall protect (secure) and improve the environment and safeguard the waters, air and land, forest and wild life of Nigeria*. This simply means that the condition for security is the maintenance of the carrying capacity of the environment, upon which socio-economic activities are based.

It implies that a threat to any section of the ecological cycle could spark off a reverberating effect on other parts of the system, like such that is experienced in the Niger Delta, where threat to the environment affects means of livelihood of the people pose security threat to their survival that in turn instigated protest that turned violent and armed struggle that pose internal security threat to the entire nation. This

experience corroborates the claim of the liberalists that everything is connected to everything, which a threat to security anywhere can be diffused to everywhere. In this sense, national security in all dimensions, therefore means the protection of human life and the environment against any form of threat. Thus, it is obvious that security is a contested concept, as there is disagreement whether the focus should be on individual or group but there is consensus among scholars that it implies freedom from attack on core values, both at the level of individual and the state.

However, in view and ways of the Nigerian governments, national security which takes precedence over everything else means an uninterrupted production of crude oil, irrespective of the impact on the environment and local inhabitants, while the locals take security as imperative (Ibeanu, 2008: 215). Thus the most fundamental basis for conflict between the Nigerian state and communities in the Niger Delta is the contradictory conditions of security they project. The Nigerian state is always ready to deploy its security forces at the disposal of the Oil companies who are always virtually at conflict with local communities over the issue of environmental pollution. To this end, all apparatuses of state have had to be put in the service of the oil companies, as well as mobilized to serve their interest, rather than operating in the interest of the people. Owugah(2000: 106) observes that:..

in its service to the oil companies to ensure a healthy economy, the Nigerian state has subordinated everything, including the lives and the livelihood of the people as well as the environment.

This scenario as described by Owugah prompted Ledum, an environmental right activist, to corroborate the claim of local communities which alleged that there is a conspiracy between the oil companies and the government not only to exploit them but also to repress and even kill them (Ledum, 2012:11). This has produced a burning sense of injustice on which the various forms of agitation in the region potentially feed. According to Omotola(2006:26), Ibodje (2008) because of the centrality of oil in the government and politics of Nigeria, it has become necessary for the State which depends on it for its revenue and survival to ensure that conditions are conducive that she even therefore crack down on protesters both for the purpose of increasing production of the commodity and the maximization of its own share of the proceeds.

This explains the crucial alliance between the state and the oil companies, which undermined the security of the Niger Delta Peoples (Omotola, 2006: 26; Ibodje,2008: 159). It unleashes State violence through militarism. State violence in this sense clearly illustrates the continuing tendency of people in power to privatize the instrumentality of state, in this case using them to pursue the private interests of state officials (Richard, 1991; Ibeanu, 2008:216). Thus the failure of the various government on behalf of the Nigerian state to seek for hard political and security intelligence in and around communities in the Niger Delta and by extension other groups in Nigeria for the real cause, dimensions and root of violence left it with little

choice than to send the military to the region whenever she perceives that her interest in oil is threatened. According to Ibodje(2008, p 149), whatever right explanation of the issues underlying conflict situation in the country, the development there from have implications for national security.

### **How the Environment, Natural Resource Ownership and Sharing Issues Are Linked with Contemporary Security Threat in the World**

Environmental problems are not new. Again, resource sharing problem is not equally new to the world. Human societies have long perhaps through natural or manmade factor has made some major impact on the environment. Their tendency to exploit it as if is an inexhaustible resources has repeatedly led to disaster, sometimes leading to the loss of entire human communities, as in Chernobyl in defunct Soviet Union(now in Ukraine), Bhopal India, Gulf of Mexico oil spill in the United States of America(USA), Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan, among many others. These manmade disasters make us to appreciate the fact that economic pressure can cause environmental stress and social tension within state can further have security implications.

Similarly, the availability of natural resources, in developing countries of Africa and Latin America as claimed by Okogu (2007, p56; Okolo 2016, p1-219), has been regarded as root of “conflict and therefore a threat to national security”. The assertion by Okogu could as well logically explain the underlying conflict factors in the Niger Delta as identified by Suberu(1996) quoted in Enojo (2010, p 127) to have been prompted by their basic demand and grievances, to include

The disposition of mineral land rents; the application of the derivation to allocation of federally collected mineral revenues; the appropriate institutional and fiscal responses to the ecological problems of the oil producing communities; and the appropriate arrangements for securing the integrity and autonomy of oil producing communities within the present federal structure

The foregoing assertion by Enojo, corroborates the claim by Osaghae(1995, p 94 & 325) that crisis in the region was “marked by two contradictory trends”: oil the main income earner for the nation is derived from there, whereas the communities in his word “belong to rank of most backward and politically marginalized groups in the country”; and in spite of the huge resources generated from there, infrastructure was lacking, rather environmental degradation through oil pollution and spillage continued to be their lot, while poverty, violence .....are the norm of life. This is what Enojo referred to as crisis of imbalance or development dilemma, as politics of revenue sharing remains a contending national debate.

Scholars attest to the fact that many of the economic and social sources of insecurity in the contemporary world are linked to environmental scarcity (Baylis, 1997 p 196). According to Homer-Dixon (1993 p18) the scarcity of cropland, food,

water, forests and fish, together with atmospheric changes such as global warming and Climate Change have an important impact on national and global security. According to him, the control over oil was a major cause of the Gulf war in 1991 and tension over the control of water resources in the occupied West Bank has help to heightened tension between Arabs and Jews in Israel complicating the efforts to achieve a durable peace settlement in the region.

In analyzing how environmental issues impacted on contemporary global security Myers (2004 p.16) posits that to establish the security of those environmental factors that is essential to conducive human existence such as food, water, vegetation, climate, minerals and others that ultimately underpin socio-economic activities and hence our very survival is the essential precondition for national security and by extension political stability. According to Enojo (2010), the security of the ecosystem is therefore tied to the very security of the state. In his views, a breach in ecological security is equivalent to an internal insurrection in the sense that it can undermine the security of a state or damage the very rubric that holds the society together and make it vulnerable to other forms of invasion.

Water, food and minerals supply for instance, the elements of the environment has been the common cause of conflicts armed and other wise, especially among and in the developing countries of the world. The conflict between India and Pakistan over the Indus; between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Afghanistan over the shared river basin wetland; between Turkey, Syria and Iraq over the Rivers Tigris and Euphrates; between Bangladesh, India and Nepal over the Ganges; between Argentina and Brazil over the Rio de la Plata, between Chile and Peru, and many more are cases in point (Osawe and Ibebunjo, 2010: 177). According to Myer (2004) for the past decades, there have been more than 450 water and minerals related disputes of hostile sorts and on 37 occasion rival nations have fired shots, blown up dam or undertaken some other form of violent action that constitute a threat to national and international security.

On the Africa front the examples includes Ogaden war between Ethiopia and Somalia in the late 1980s, Nigeria and Cameroon disputes over the oil rich Bakassi , Nigeria and Chad over Lake Chad, food crisis in Somalia due to long period of drought. Environmental issues have exerted pressure on many third world countries, producing domestic unrest and repression ; violation of human rights and break down of society itself (Olson, 1991:356). Olson averred that intense human activity involves in trying to overcome poverty threatening the whole ecosystem in some areas. Such consequences in Olson views are endemic, most especially in Africa given it technological drawback and absence of system of governance based on the principle that sovereignty that resides in the people. Examples are conflict over oil or 'blood diamond' that caused civil wars in Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo Between Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola, and Cote d'Ivoire([www.globalissuesorg/aniclws7/the](http://www.globalissuesorg/aniclws7/the)). Therefore, it has become obvious

that the pollution the environment, mostly water and air, claim of title to ownership environmental resources and control are sources of the most contemporary global issue that can impact any state regardless of whether they are failed, fragile, weak or strong (Osawe and Ibebunjo, 2010).

### **Theoretical Framework And The Application**

There is consensus among scholars in the social sciences that theory is a verifiable logical statement linking specific instances to wider one or from broader to specific, clearly describing as well as explaining how things, including issues are connected, interact and function in real world of the phenomenon under investigation. As result, this paper adopts three theories: Frustration Aggression and Relative Deprivation Theories and the Diffusion Innovation Theory, to explain the connections between twin issues of environmental degradation and the protest for environmental restoration on the one hand and the struggle to re-install derivation as principle for oil revenue sharing that instigated protests which snowballed into Kidnapping for ransom, armed struggle and terrorism and how the contagious effects of these agitation techniques spread like wild harmattan fire, adopted and applied by protesting groups in other regions in Nigeria, including the MASSOB/IPOB in the south east and the Boko haram in the north east, and criminal elements across the country.

On the one hand, the Frustration Aggression, and Relative Deprivation Theory is most relevant for explaining the prevailing links between environmental concern, poverty and insurgency in Nigeria. In 1939, some group of psychologist in Yale Institute of Human Relations, led by John Dollard, Leonard Doob, Neal Miller, O.H Mowrer, and Robert Sear propounded the theory which attempts to account for virtually all human aggressive behavior, with a few basic ideas. "Aggression is always a consequence of frustration". They are quick to note that:

- (i) The occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration.
- (ii) The existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression.

Meanwhile, Baron (1977:92) and Zilman (1979:3) attribute the demonstration of aggressive response to frustration, to the involvement of supplemental factors, such as attack on a person or group interests. They shared the views that barrier to goal attainment would produce aggressive reactions only when they are unexpected. To them the likelihood that unexpected barrier to goal attainment will give rise to an aggressive reaction would depend on the aversiveness of the event. In light of this, we can understand how the constant environmental degradation that results from the activities of Oil Multinational Corporations in the Niger Delta that creates wealth for the inaccessible Nigerian Government, produced negative multiplier effects on the livelihood of the people and the concomitant poverty in the region that results there

from, is a frustration indice that aggression led to aggressive behavior that was targeted at their perceived source of frustration.

Like Gur cited in Otite and Omobighe(2006:254), rightly pointed out when explaining political violence, that when there is great level of relative deprivation among members of collectivity, there exist potentials for collective violence. It is worthy of note that the logic of this theory is applicable to the experience in the Niger Delta, where pollution strain food resources, means of livelihoods are threatened, created condition for poverty, ultimately malnutrition limits the mental and physical development of children, the energies and abilities of adults, otherwise the quality of the population and a feeling of deprivation ensues. This was the prime driver conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta and other parts of Nigeria. Therefore, the analysis could make bold to say, it is apparent that poverty is a source frustration and it leads to show of discontent. It is equally obvious that aggressiveness of the discontented young people is a result of intense frustration that may not be unrelated to a feeling of helplessness in the face of hostile government policies.

On the other hand, the Diffusion Innovation Theory, demonstrates is most appropriate in explaining how terror techniques diffuse in any social system. Like in the field of biological and chemical sciences, Diffusion implies the spread of a substance from a place where it is more in concentration to a place where the concentration is less. It was developed into social science theory by Everett Mitchell Roger in 1962, titled Diffusion Innovation Theory. Roger was a social scientist particularly from the discipline of Rural Sociology and Communication, who was faced with the challenges of understanding how idea spread in any social system. Specifically, the theory of Diffusion like is obtainable in the field of natural sciences, was developed by Roger to explain his curiosity over the years about “how an idea or product gain momentum and spread (diffuse) through a specific population or a social system.”

The theory claimed that people, as part of a social system, adopt a new idea, behavior, or product”. According to the proponents, adoption means that when people acquire the new idea they tend to do things differently or in the new ways they have learnt. It further explains that people who adopt an innovation tends to manifest the attribute they have acquired. Thus Roger argued that “diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated over time among participants in social system. Therefore its logic is applicable in explaining how security threat of such dimension as kidnapping, armed struggle and terrorism which have it root in Nigeria through the Niger Delta Crisis have developed, spread beyond the region and adopted by agitators in other regions of the country who may have been faced with similar claim of non inclusion and marginalization, especially by the IPOB in the South east and the Bokoharam in the North east and other criminal elements in Nigeria who have taken to kidnap for ransom.

### **Environmental Cum Socio Economic Concern and Armed Struggle in the Niger Delta**

Environmental stress, the socio economic implications and the demand for redress that had gradually built up in the Niger Delta grew strong enough to bring about sudden and violent changes that began since the 1990's. The people of the region demand for justice and seek redress through various ways. This have both peaceful and violent phase that gradually snowballed into armed struggle. It really began according to Omotola, (2006) "with litigations, media and publicity, peaceful street protest and graduated into forceful occupation/disruption of work, vandalization of oil facilities and shutting down of oil flow station" and eventually there were brutal crackdown on protesters by State security forces(Omotola,2006; Okolo,2012,2016). But with the growing attacks on protesters mostly women by police and security operatives, counter violence became an attractive option to advance their cause. The youths organize themselves into group to fight what they considered as oppression. With the emergence of organized groups, self styled freedom fighters, but regarded as militant by the state and its partners, the protest was escalated into violence in the form armed struggle which began with serial attack on oil formations, police and other security personnel blamed for the attacks on them.

The groups stopped peaceful protest and went underground. That was how insurgency started and they began attack on oil company workers, kidnapping and extorting money from the expatriates and engaged in physical shooting with the Nigerian army largely deployed to the region. To quell the civil unrest, the government responded with reprisal attack, results in the killing, raping, looting, burning of properties and sacking of villages, with increasing consequences of internally displaced persons(IDP) as in the cases of Umuechem, Ogoni, Choba, Yenogoa, Kaiama massacre, destruction of Odi, Gbaramatu kingdom and sacking of Ayakoromo, and many others.(HRW,1999;Ibodje,2008:163;Ibaba & Okolo,2009: 1-18; Oregha,2010:94;Wikipedia, 2011).

For instance, in Ogoni, which its issue of pollution is still a subject of national and international debate, the people under leadership of Ken Saro Wiwa led group, Movement for the Emancipation of Ogoni People(MOSOP), challenged the activities of Shell, the operator of Shell/NNPC Joints Venture which they alleged to have polluted the environment for decades, destroying their means of livelihood without adequate remediation. MOSOP protests provoked a violent and repressive response from the government. The government ban public gatherings and declared that disturbances of oil production were acts of treason. Consequently, thousands of Ogoni were arrested and detained by security operatives, sacked villages, around 100,000 persons were displaced and about 2000 Civilians deaths, including, Ken Saro Wiwa the leader of MOSOP, together with eight others on allegation of killing 4 community leaders whom were anti the struggle (HRW, 1999: Ibodje. 2008: 159,

Agbo, 2008:74). Consequently, Shell was forced to shut its operations in Ogoni land for about 12 years.

Drawing inspirations from the Ogoni's, Ijaw youths gathered in Kaiama on 11/12/1998 and made ten Declarations known as Kaiama Declaration'. They reaffirmed "that all land and natural resources within Ijaw territory belong to Ijaw communities and are the basis of our survival". As a results they advise that all oil companies to withdraw from the land by 30/12/1998. Consequent upon that, on December 30, 1998, and early January 1999, as they tried to make their declarations a reality, over 15 protesting youths in Yenogoa were shot dead by Nigerian soldiers and in other occasions a brutal crackdown on protesters were experienced. The military declared a state of emergency throughout Bayelsa state, imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew, and banned community meetings. At military roadblocks, local residents were severely beaten or detained. At night, soldiers invaded private homes, terrorizing residents with beating women and girls with rape (Omotola, 2006; Wikipedia, 2011).

Outraged by the incidence, the protesters decided to embark on change of tactic to violent destruction of oil facilities, kidnapping of oil Companies workers and later car bombing, which marked the second phase of the struggle. Armed youths attacked a shell convoy in cawthorne channel, killed over nine Nigerian soldiers, took oil workers hostage, as they demanded for release of Asari Dokubo, the Niger Delta Volunteer Force, who was detained by the Government security force. Rather than effect his release, the Federal gave them money to free the abductees, which became counterproductive, because it makes them realized that they can kidnap for money, thus kidnapping was largely deployed as one of the ways to seek redress. Tom (2007:2), particularly point that Gun men raided an ExxonMobil residential quarter and abducted four Scottish oil workers, and demanded 10 million US dollar each for their release. Thenceforth, armed men abducted and release within a month over 17 expatriates in Port Harcourt, after hefty ransom payments. According to Tom, (2007) during the grab they killed one Nigeria soldier and the Nigerian military answered with great devastation by burning down every structure around the areas of the incidents leaving over 3000 residents homeless. By May, 2009 a full scale battle ensued as the presidency ordered the arrest of Government Ekpomukpolo and his lieutenants over the alleged killing of 12 soldiers including an Army lieutenant on May 13, by militants operating from camp 5 in Delta state which led the sacking of Gbaramatu community.

In reprisal attack, MEND attack shell pipeline — Trans Ramos pipeline at Aghoro-2 in Bayelsa State on I 7-6-09(The Nation 19 June 2009); MEND blow up NAOC facility in Nembe creek Bayelsa on 19/6/09 (The vanguard, 20 June 2009); MEND attacked the offshore Okan Manifold Escravos, Warn , Delta State on 5/7/09(the Vanguard 6 July 2009); MEND bomb chevron pipeline at Olero to Abiteve oil field on 10/7/09 (The Vanguard, 2009)]; and MEND blow up of key fuel

jetty in Lagos Atlas Cove, 7 dead on 13/7/09 (The Vanguard, 14/ 7/2009). In May 2009, there was reprisal attack by the military in Gbaramatu, and later in Ayakoromo, June 10, 2010 in Delta State over the death of 11 and 15 soldiers, respectively suspected to have been killed by the militants, where properties worth billions naira were destroyed and thousands of persons were left without homes (Oregha, 2010:194). In October 1, 2010, MEND claimed responsibility for car bombing on Independence Day celebration that claimed lives of many Nigerians and properties.

### **Niger Delta Armed Struggle and wider Security Threat in Nigeria**

The Niger Delta armed struggle has serious security implication for the country, which has manifested in various ways. As noted in the previous sections, it has assist to raise another round of criminality in the country such as kidnapping which the nation security system is incapable to stop since it started in the Niger Delta. The arrest in 2005 and detention in Abuja prison of Asari Dokubo, the leader of Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (MDPVF) by the government force led to the rise of a most violent group, the Movement for The Emancipation of Niger Delta, equally have informed the protester to elect to take to hostage taking. Hostage taking entered the arsenal as bargain chip and later as source of revenue. Keyamo (2008:15) avers that the incarceration of Asari Dokuho actually triggered the incessant case of kidnapping in the region. According to him they resort to these tactics inadvertently in order to pressure for the releases of Asari, but to thwart this effort, government started dole out money to these ‘boys to release hostages, until the ‘boys’ now felt that look, this is a big business, we don’t even have to kidnap for Asari sake we can kidnap for forsake of money and then the whole thing explored into criminality and the business it have become today”.

Today Kidnapping as bargaining chip in the struggle for environmental justice in the Niger Delta has become rampant in the region and has been adopted by criminals as it spread like, wild fire to other parts of Nigeria that it now posed great human security to the entire country. Most time, oil workers and individuals, including highly placed government officials have been kidnapped and released at the payment of ransom, thus worsening the security situation in the nation. Precisely on January 11, 2006, hostage taking of oil workers started in Bayelsa state after the declaration of ‘Operation Orido Danger’ by MEND with the kidnapping of four set of hostages namely: Mikko Nichevi (Bulgarian), Harry Ebanks (Honduras), Arnold Laundry (American) and Nigel Watson Clark (Briton). Thenceforth, over 200 expatriate had been kidnapped since the commencement of the ugly incidence, although most were released within weeks in exchange for ransoms, typically hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Besides expatriates, individuals, including the spouse and relatives of government officials have been kidnapped by either militants or criminals for ransoms. Amongst these are: the wife of the Nigerian Central Bank Governor, Mrs.

Emefeli, Mrs. Cecilia Omehia the mother of Mr. Celestine Omehia, Governor of Rivers State was kidnapped on May 01, 2007, chief Okowa, the father of the Governor of Delta State, Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa. In May 2010 five Medical Doctors were kidnapped in Benin Edo State, the mother of Sani Lulu, former president of Nigeria Foot Ball Federation (NFF) was abducted in Kogi State. In Ekiti State the Chairman of the state chapter of Trade Union Congress, Dr. Gabriel Olowo. They also targeted toddlers, Young Michael Steward, son to a member of the Rivers State House of Assembly; three years old British toddler, Margaret Hill; and Samuel Amadi, the two years old son of the Eze of Iriebe Kingdom, Dr. Francis Amadi and many others.

Meanwhile, the targets then were mainly expatriates working in the region. But presently kidnapping of expatriates is no more an issue since Amnesty programme commence in the Niger Delta. Yet kidnapping has degenerated into a scale criminal phenomenon in Nigeria. For quite some time kidnapers have expand their coverage to anyone in Nigeria that has hostage value or the ability to attract or pay ransom. Currently kidnapping is taking an alarming dimension in Nigeria. The list of kidnapper's victims is in exhaustive as no week passes by without kidnap incidents in different parts of the country being reported in the media (Ogege, 2010:141). It therefore reveals that kidnapping is now a national security crisis as it permeates virtually every regions of Nigeria.

Again the crises in the Niger Delta have created a kind of mined struggle culture hitherto unknown in the history of Nigeria outside the civil war. Unlike the civil war, and June 12, 1993 crisis where the Yoruba of the South West Nigeria rallied under the Oodua People's Congress (OPC) flag and even canvassed for Oduduwa Republic unless the mandate was actualized, while their Militant Youths(OPC) were out in the street, it has given birth to a whole lot of criminality or criminal activities disguised as part of the struggle for justice and sharing of oil revenues from the Niger Delta. Such criminality includes, terrorists bombing of national assets and private homes, organized armed robbery on Banks, kidnapping etc. These insecurity implications have not only permeated the society as whole, with kidnapping very rampant, but it has taken a step further with the insurgent of the Boko Haram group with ulterior motive (getting their share of the national cake) have also resort to bombing of national assets, churches, social spots and killing innocent people in the name of Jihad; an act which constitute a threat to national security. According to Pini(2012: 17)

If you link up statements made by Sanusi Lamido, the erstwhile central Bank Governor , now the Emir of Kano and Babangida Aliyu, a former Governor of Niger State and then chairman of Northern Governors Forum "unfavourable Federation Allocation", what the coalition of concerned Northerners called" lopsidedness in structure of the nations politics and economy' and beef about capital allocations by the northern caucus in the

House of Representatives you will get a very clear reason for emergence of Boko- Haram, why the north kept stridently silent for a while and why it has come out since the day of Jonathan inauguration in May 2011, now boldly to confront the South South using terrorism in the North as a backup.

Thus, the Northern region has taken a clue from the amnesty program occasioned by the crises in the Niger Delta to arrange for their militant struggle to attract the government attention to their side. They are now seen it as means of getting their own share of the so called 'national cake'. This view was in light of call by muslim leader, Sadiq Musa, on the Federal Government to grant amnesty to members of the Boko-Haram, terrorist group, as a way of resolving the security crises pose by the group (Amazie,2012:11). With attention given to the Niger Delta Militants through the Demobilization Disarmament and Rehabilitation (DDR) programme of the Federal Government now make it look as if only violence gets the Government attention. As such the Boko Hararn insurgents have constantly draw a parallel between the Niger Delta militants. The intellectual arm' of Boko Haram has suddenly woken up to demand amnesty for confessed Al Qaeda affiliate terrorists, Farouk Abdulmutallab, the underwear Christmas Day attempt bomber of United States plane (Pini. 2012: 17). Therefore, in Nigeria crime has become seen as political agitation requiring Amnesty.

These situations have therefore led to growing fragility of the Nigerian state. Most fundamentally, the conflict produced the impression of growing fragility of the Nigerian State, as it has created the reign of tenor, where rule of law is consigned to the realm of mere fads and rhetoric. There where large scale abuse of human rights, illegal mass arrest and detention without trial and very many persons were killed while many others were displaced. Of a particular concern presently is the Boko Haram insurgent who have adopted the terror techniques applied by the Niger Delta Militant, such as the abduction of expatriate. Two foreigners (Briton, Chris McNamus and Italian, France Lamolinara), construction company workers who were taken hostage in May 2011 in Kebbi Stale by the sect members, were whisked to Sokoto State where they were eventually killed on March, 2012(Agbo, 2012 p.22).

Boko Haram was a small band around religious leader, Yusuf who was murdered by Police in 2009, rose into a movement, after the April, 2011 Presidential Election, which saw the incumbent president from the south, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan as the winner, which now fight the state. Though according to Nwagbo, Ayogu and Chukwujekwu(2016, p.227) "Boko Haram turn political to seek redress of non completion of eight years (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> tenure) by the North after President Yar'dua's death according to PDP power sharing arrangement" . Nevertheless, the group came to national limelight within July 23-31, 2009, just immediately after the Federal Government proclamation of Amnesty for the Niger Delta militants, June 26, 2009 by former President, Musa Yar'adua, which commenced August 6 and terminated on

October 4, 2009. Within the same period, the Boko Haram insurgency broke out in the Northern Nigeria precisely with paralleled mission, but used religion as disguise, whose terrorist attacks on national and international assets culminated in the attacks on United Nations office in Abuja, national Police Head Quarters, military formations, Churches, Social Spots, killing innocent persons and the issuance of quit notice Order on all Southerners and Christians resident in the Northern part of Nigeria and counter issuance of similar Order of quit notice to all northern Moslems resident in the South by the Niger Delta militant or face reprisal attack portends disintegration for country.

Meanwhile, Nwakwo (2005: 33) has foretold the Northern insurgency when He stated that:

that six out of power at the centre is having a telling effect on the North, and the jihad recently proposed by deposed Emir of Gwandu, is a reflection that soon, the militant wing of Arewa could show some action, using religious riot.

In confirming Nwakwo views, political and religious (Islam) leaders from the North have blame the upsurge on poverty in the North and have therefore call for increase revenue to the region, and have also seek that the Federal Government Amnesty programme should also be extended to the Boko-Haram terrorists in the North (Vanguard, 2012:11). Now they have evolved into Nigeria most security threat, with no sign of abating. Boko-Haram have claimed responsibility for hundred of deaths. Therefore, terror tactics of the Niger Delta Militants is now a franchise used by criminal gangs and sundry interests who have penchant for crime. Every citizens and residents of Nigeria today lives in the fear of being kidnapped for ransom, the bombs and bullets of Boko-Haram insurgents and criminals who hide behind their grievances and tactics to wreck havoc on the lives of Nigerians. The government now armed itself for a war with enemies it cannot see who live in the midst of the people. Criminals are as well armed with bombs, bullets and dynamite to rob, maim and kill. Ordinary citizens are arming themselves against attack in case they have occasion to defend themselves. Communities are arming themselves against other communities. Our nation is armed and dangerous.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The oil rich Niger Delta has been embroiled in national security crises between the state security forces and militant groups over certain fundamental issues affecting the environment, the economy among others. Militant have fought with government forces and have forced oil production shut down, sabotage oil facilities and take foreign oil workers hostage and early carry out lethal car bombing, with fierce reprisal attacks from the Nigeria military which have heightened security concern and sustained blood Violence in the country.

The environment and the economy are so intimately connected to our deepest national values that they are constitutive of our security interests, that when these values are threatened, our very security is threatened, ipso facto. Therefore, the inadequate enforcement of relevant environmental regulations and the non uniformity in application national income distribution policy as a result of weak institutional capacity is the cause of the conflict in the Niger Delta. The environmental crisis in the Niger Delta and the conflicts that emanates there from have presents national security dilemma to Nigeria. With every assault by insurgents, the Nigeria military answered with devastation. As a result, individuals are at risk from violence either from the government or the militant as both was engaged in armed struggle. The conflict situations constitute a threat to national security in every dimension.

Therefore, from the standpoint of human security and the building of Nigeria nationhood, the gross neglect of the environment of oil producing communities despite constitutional provisions for its protection, has spill security implications up to the more direct attack on oil formations, hostage taking and kidnapping of expatriates and Nigerian syndrome now entered the arsenal of Nigerian criminals and counter attacks on the regional militia in Nigeria, be it Avenger, IPOB, OPC OR Boko-Haram by the Nigerian military constitutes a serious national security Dilemma to the Nation. The conflicts discouraged local entrepreneur- and scare away foreign investors from Nigeria as they realize that the security license for them to operate cannot be guaranteed. It has created the thinking in Nigeria that it is only through violence that we can get the government to stand up to its responsibilities. This can be viewed in light of the Amnesty in the Niger Delta and government call for dialogue with the Boko-Haram sects in the north.

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