

The Resurgence of Militancy in Nigeria's Niger Delta: The Failure of the Post Amnesty Programme

About CPED Policy Brief

Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED) policy brief series is designed to draw attention of stakeholders to key findings and their implication as a research is conducted. The general objective is to contribute to a body of evidence that can influence the development, modification and implementation of policies across various sectors in Nigeria. The primary focus, therefore, is to outline actionable recommendations for policy influence and result utilization by government institutions and other key stakeholders in Nigeria.

This publication is supported by Think Tank Initiative (TTI) arm of International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Management of Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED), Benin City, Nigeria.

Introduction

The Niger Delta is a region endowed with rich oil wealth and resources. The petroleum industry is the backbone of the Nigerian economy, accounting for over 90% of total foreign exchange revenue (Omotoso, 2011:69). Despite the oil wealth prevalent in the Niger Delta region, there is the issue of relative deprivation of the people of the Niger Delta region. This has resulted in poverty and underdevelopment of the Niger Delta region. It is seen that the poverty situation in turn has brought about bitterness, tension and violence for it is one thing for a society to undergo a situation of extreme poverty for lack of sufficient economic resources, it is another scenario for a people to be subjected to mass deprivation while been in the midst of overflowing resources (Omotoso, 2011:85). In the Niger Delta, militancy and violence arose out of rage and bitterness of being suppressed, subdued and oppressed (Omotoso, 2011:101). The long aged relative deprivation of the Niger Delta region despite its economic contribution to the survival of Nigeria has brought about unemployment and untold hardship to the people in the region which led to militancy and now the resurgence of the Niger Delta Avengers in the region.

Due to the emergence and rise of militancy in Niger Delta which resulted in armed violence, hostage- taking, kidnapping and illegal oil bunkering in the region, the Amnesty programme was set up in the region to bring about a lasting solution to the militancy in the region. The Post- Amnesty period failed to lay concrete and massive development in the Niger Delta region, thereby resulting in renewed hostilities and a state of general insecurity since March 2016 with the resurgence of a new militant group known as the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) (THEWILL, 2016).

Methodology

Secondary sources were used for data collection. These include newspaper, magazines, journals, books, conference paper and official report. Both descriptive and analytical methods were used for examining the various pipeline vandalisms and kidnapping in the region orchestrated by the emergence of new militant groups. The policy brief seeks to x-ray the failure of the amnesty programme which led to resurgence of militancy in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria.

There has been the blowing up of Chevron and Shells gas pipeline, among others, for which the Niger Delta Avengers, NDA, claimed responsibility (THEWILL, 2016).

Furthermore, in the face of unemployment rate hitting 12.1%, youth unemployment, 42.24%, the GDP recording a negative growth of -0.36%, inflation standing at 13.7%, Crude Oil accounting for 90% exports and 70% of national revenue, crude oil production dropping to low levels, and the country facing recession, a foreign exchange and power supply crisis, and financial insolvency, renewed militancy in the Niger Delta, and threats by Avengers who want to cut off Nigeria's major source of revenue, can only further deepen the people's agony, and place the country on danger list (Abati, 2016). Thus, with the country facing economic recession the people are the most affected by the economic hardship. However, many scholars especially from the Niger Delta region have advocated that the way forward to tackling the resurgence of militancy in the region is through dialogue but unfortunately, some interest groups are towing the military line of the President, which in our conviction will inflame the hostilities

Key Findings on the Resurgence of Militancy in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

The findings of the research on the resurgence of militancy in the Niger Delta region shows that the Post-Amnesty period failed to lay concrete and massive development in the Niger Delta region, thereby resulting in renewed hostilities and a state of general insecurity since March 2016 with the resurgence of a new militant group known as the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA).

- There has been a continued under-development of the Niger Delta region which has resulted in resource control agitation by various people and groups of the region leading to the rise and emergence of militancy in the region especially since 2006.
- Also, with the failure of the Post-Amnesty Period to lay concrete and massive development in the Niger Delta region, the feeling of relative deprivation, the people of the Niger Delta have now joined or formed social movements especially armed militant groups like the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) with hope of redressing their grievances leading to the resurgence of militancy in the region.
- The frequent destruction oil producing facilities and installations by the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) has affected Nigeria's daily crude oil production and Nigeria is currently facing economic recession.

Policy Recommendations

In resolving the current resurgence of militancy in the Niger Delta, the key policy recommendations are that;

- (I) Firstly, the Federal government should do the needful in bringing concrete and massive development to the region.
- (II) Secondly, the Niger Delta Avengers must hold leaders from the region accountable for the mismanagement of funds meant for the development of the region.
- (III) Lastly federal government should find a lasting, far reaching amicable solution through national dialogue in ending the resurgence of militancy in the region other than exploring military option.

Conclusion

Locally and internationally, that the Niger Delta, in Nigeria is the “goose that lays the golden egg” had been a subject of immense deliberation for a long time now. A lot had been said about the exploitation and apparent neglect of the area by the multinational oil companies acting in concert with the federal government of Nigeria. The Niger Delta region remains underdeveloped, as the Post Amnesty Period failed to lay concrete and massive development in the region, and this has resulted in a feeling of deprivation thereby leading to the resurgence of militancy and renewed hostilities in the region. This is a critical period in the history of Nigeria, in which the Niger Delta region is currently experiencing the resurgence of militancy in the region with the emergence of a new militant group ‘the Niger Delta Avengers’ which have resulted in hostilities and destruction of oil pipeline in the region. These renewed hostilities has resulted in economic loss as Nigeria is experiencing low crude oil production and facing economic recession.

References

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Acknowledgment

The report presented in this brief was drawn from a research conducted by CPED junior researcher, Mr. Chukwuemeka Egberase Okuchukwu and was reviewed and compiled by CPED communications team led by Job Imharobere Eronmhonsele, in fulfillment of implementation of CPED research agenda on Peace Building and Development in Nigeria’s Niger Delta Region.

ABOUT CPED

The Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED) is an independent Think Tank organization dedicated to promoting sustainable development and reducing poverty and inequality through policy oriented research and active engagement on development issues. CPED is located in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. The Organisation was formally registered in Nigeria by the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) in 1999. CPED is a member of different Think Tank Networks including the “West Africa Think Tanks Network (WATTNet)”, and also a beneficiary of the Think Tank Initiative (TTI), a multi-donor program of the *International Development Research Centre (IDRC)*, Canada. The Centre’s Executive Director is **Professor Emeritus Andrew Godwin Onokerhoraye**, vice chancellor University of Benin (1992-1998).

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