

# Resource War and Amnesty Programme in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria: A critical analysis

Joseph Okwesili NKWEDE<sup>1</sup>, Godwin Ikechukwu UDEUHELE<sup>1</sup>,  
Aloysius Sunday IBEOGU<sup>2</sup>, Nurul AZIZAH<sup>3</sup> and Destiny  
Uchenna NWODOM<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Political Science, Ebonyi State University,  
Abakaliki, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Department of Public Administration, Ebonyi State University,  
Abakaliki, Nigeria

<sup>3</sup>Department of Postgraduate Programme, Universitas Ibrahimy,  
Situbondo, Indonesia

<sup>4</sup>Department of Political Science, University of Nigeria Nsukka  
Email: joseph.nkwede@ebsu.edu.ng

## Abstract

This study examined the resource war and amnesty programme in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. The study is a qualitative research. Explanatory and historical research designs were adopted with data generated from secondary sources and descriptively analysed. Our findings, which were based on the idea of the post-colonial state, demonstrated that state decision-making has remained heavily centralized, concentrating political and economic power in the hands of state governors, whose huge patronage powers are derived from oil profits. The study recommends amongst others that: government should live up to its responsibility and promise towards addressing the environmental challenges caused by oil exploration activities in the Niger Delta region as this will go a long way in enhancing peace in the region.

**Keywords:** Resource War, Amnesty Programme, Oil Exploration, Environmental Degradation, Nigeria

## **Introduction**

Before commercial oil production began in 1958, the Niger Delta region of Nigeria was essentially a virgin ecosystem that provided subsistence resources for the most sedentary people. The commercial fishing sector in Nigeria strongly relied on the region (Afinotan & Ojakorotu, 2009). For decades, the people of the region were contented with farming, fishing and other pursuits like pottery, mat-making, and hunting, oblivious of the fact that beneath their land lay one of nature's most valuable mineral resources.

Oil was discovered in 1956 near Oloibiri in the Niger Delta by Shell Petroleum Development Company. Oil has since become the backbone of the Nigerian economy, accounting for more than 90 percent of the country's foreign exchange earnings; it is therefore no surprise that the country's constitutional development, socio-economic development, and class formation have all been heavily influenced and dictated by oil politics (Owugah, 1999). While the Nigerian government sees the availability of crude resources as a 'Blessing' and a source of competitive advantage in the global market, the communities from which it is obtained perceive it as a 'Curse.' This is because huge crude oil exploitation has caused major developmental, social and environmental challenges, which the Nigerian government and collaborating oil corporations have ignored. Owugah (1999:106) wrote lamenting the situation: "The oil, which gave so much riches to the nation and those in power, brought much poverty, disease, death, and loss of livelihood to the people of the oil-bearing areas".

With the formation of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), a pan-Niger Delta paramilitary group in 2006, the fight for local ownership of Nigeria's oil took on a more militant approach. Apart from MEND, which appears to have articulated issues such as environmental insecurity and the socio-economic marginalization of the Niger Delta People, many other groups have developed in the Niger Delta. However, it appears that some of these groups are motivated by criminality rather than a liberation philosophy. Independently, these groups' operations pose a serious security threat in Nigeria's oil region. Oil sites have been attacked, and oil personnel, notably expatriates, have been taken captive for ransom. All of these were taking place despite the presence of a large Joint Task Force (JTF) made up of the Navy, Army and

Air Force. The JTF was often overwhelmed by the militants' superior weaponry. Late President Umaru Yar'Adua, on June 25, 2009, offered amnesty for militants who were willing to relinquish their arms, in what appeared to be recognition of the futility of violent resistance. Amnesty was divided into three stages: disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR). The ex-belligerents' weapons of war were physically removed from them during the disarmament (weapons, ammunition). Demobilization is the process of removing active combatants from armed groups in a formal and controlled manner, followed by their processing in temporary centres and the provision of assistance packages. The process of reintegrating former combatants/militants into civilian life in order to prevent the reintroduction of armed conflict is known as reintegration. The primary purpose of this research was to look into the Nigerian government's resource war and amnesty programme, as well as the repercussions for the Niger Delta region's growth.

Against this backdrop, the cardinal objective of this paper was to examine the phenomenon of resource war and the amnesty programme in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria by answering the following questions: What are the root causes of armed conflict and youth restiveness in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria? What has government done to ameliorate the hue and cry of the people in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria? What are the effects of the amnesty programme embarked upon by the federal government on the people of the Niger Delta?

### **Literature Review**

In its broadest definition, amnesty is a political weapon for reconciliation and compromise offered by a sovereign to persons who have committed acts of treason and/or revolt against the state. O'Shea (2002) defines amnesty as legal exemption from either criminal or civil legal repercussions, or both, for previous wrongs done in a political setting. Granting amnesty necessitates the following:

1. That its grantee has committed a crime that is either identifiable or punishable under a National Criminal Legal System or in some situations, a crime recognized and punishable under International law.
2. That the issuing authority waives any legal penalties or recall of the offender's offence(s).
3. In the eyes of the law, the grantees are granted a clean slate.

Amnesty can be defined as a compromise on justice in the interest of transition, peace, reconciliation, forgiveness and truth. Peace in the Niger Delta was a major factor that prompted the amnesty programme in Nigeria, as it is a necessary condition for the optimal exploitation of oil resources, which is required to satisfy a variety of interests, including the federal government's financial interests, oil multinationals' financial interests, and the global community's need for a steady supply of the resource. This section details the federal government's amnesty project, which was designed to decrease violent outbursts from the Niger Delta region, where residents were expressing their desire for economic self-determination, with the goal of determining whether and to what degree these demands were met.

The amnesty initiative was based on the recommendations of the Niger Delta Technical Committee (NDTC), which was established on September 8, 2008, by the Federal Government of Nigeria with the following mandates:

- Examine and synthesize different reports, proposals, and recommendations on the Niger Delta, starting from the Willink Commission Report (1958), and provide a summary of the findings.
- Evaluate the summary proposals and provide a thorough short, medium, and long-term solution to the Niger Delta concerns.
- To propose and present any other recommendations that will assist the Federal Government in achieving sustainable development, peace, and human and environmental security in the Niger Delta region.

The NDTC plan highlighted three major concerns as barriers to long-term peace and prosperity in the Niger Delta, all of which required reforms. These issues included governance and the rule of law, socio-economic growth, and human development. On each of them, the Committee issued far-reaching recommendations, including the use of international standards for militant Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) as mandated in the United Nations Integrated DDR Standards to stop the tide of recurrent violence in the region.

An amnesty is a release from punishment for certain criminal, rebellious, and insurgent acts, usually against the state and society. An amnesty is always backed by law and comes with a time limit for the accused to admit their guilt and accept pardon. Amnesty ensures a period of peace, a halt of antagonism, and an uneasy calm, all of which require a post-conflict scenario for peace building.

This appeared to have reduced the frequency of warfare and the influx of guns into the region by insurgents. The second stage included the setting up of several rehabilitation centres that were specifically designed to satisfy the ex-militants' training demands. Because the centres could only accommodate a limited number of registered ex-militants, the training was conducted in batches. Each batch of ex-militants was required to spend four weeks in the rehabilitation programme, which included re-orientation, counselling, and moral/spiritual regeneration (Akinwale, 2010). A survey of the ex-militants' career goals revealed a strong preference for about ten (10) industries, ranging from oil and gas to maritime services, fabrication and welding technology, exploration, production, and processing engineering, with training programmes lasting between three and eighteen months (Akinwale, 2010). Those who wished to return to school for further education were also offered the opportunity to do so under the programme.

Before the Niger Delta militants were granted amnesty, the region was rife with militant organizations committing crimes to promote their demands. There had been no successful, institutionalized, and civic strategy to handling the problem of armed conflicts in Nigeria before the introduction of the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme. Setting up judicial commissions of inquiry was the most common, and possibly only, non-military strategy to conflict resolution.

Some academics have attempted to define what resource control entails. While one interpretation is that it means that the stakeholders in the resource-bearing area should manage greater proportions of the resources harnessed in the area, another interpretation is that it means the total takeover of the resources located in the resource-producing states by the people of those states. However, in Nigeria, resource control might be interpreted to indicate a community's substantive powers to collect monetary and other benefits resulting from the exploitation and use of

resources in its domain and use them for whatever purpose. It should be noted that governments that rely on natural resources for governance are more likely to be plagued by war. Conflicts over the distribution of state resources and control of resources within community boundaries add to the problems of political accommodation in many federations. The mode and manner in which government revenues are dispensed across the several tiers of government can be broadly defined as resource control. However, the way the available resources are utilized and determined is shrouded in uncertainty.

"If national stability and unity are to be preserved, the state-resource authority and the state regional resource distribution must be negotiated, reinterpreted, and recreated" (Ikelegbe, 2010). The nature of the contending nations dictates the outcome of the fight. Furthermore, empirical evidence reveals that federal states with a diverse industrial economy tend to decentralize fiscal powers and control of critical national resources, whereas federal states with a weak mono-cultural economy tend to centralize fiscal powers and control of critical national resources (Odeke, Agomuo & Chukwulet, 2021).

However, the central government collects the largest portion of natural resources under both models. It also has a broad variety of jurisdictional powers over important national resources, and it employs taxing powers to limit the federating units' jurisdictional powers over any resources under their jurisdiction. It is also important to note that in federal states, if the essence of federalism is to be achieved, the federating units must be economically and politically stronger than the central government in order to manage conflicts in plural societies and correct vertical imbalances caused by revenue and expenditure assignments (Osaghae, 1991).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theory of the post-colonial state is essential to this study and forms its foundation because of its effectiveness and benefits among other techniques and comprehension of the social system and related phenomena. Alavi (1972) propounded the post-colonial state theory, which was promoted by Third World scholars such as Ibeanu (1999). According to the theory, imperialism created the post-colonial state. As a result, it has followed a development path determined by imperialists

and their local supporters, rather than the bulk of the indigenous population's interests. The post-colonial state has thrown itself into a grave crisis from which it will be difficult to emerge without radically altering its current nature.

The post-colonial state, according to Alavi (1972), is built on the basis of the colonial state, which had assimilated some key components of pre-colonial basic state institutions. The colonial state's major purpose was to create conditions that would allow the foreign bourgeoisie in conjunction with the ruling class to accumulate wealth through the exploitation of indigenous people and other natural resources. The post-colonial state arose from this foundation. Despite anti-colonial struggles, the post-colonial state maintained the arbitrariness of its predecessor, according to Ibeanu (1999). This is especially true in countries such as Nigeria, where independence was negotiated with colonialists. Negotiated independence, he claimed, meant that the colonial state's architecture had not changed fundamentally; all that had changed was the personnel. As a result, the newly-formed state, while ostensibly independent and sovereign, was not only a product of imperialism but also attempted to align itself with the interests of the foreign capitalists. This is why the Nigerian government constantly favours multinational oil firms operating in the Niger Delta over the host community's interests.

One of the fundamental characteristics of the post-colonial state is its lack of autonomy (Ake, 1985). This means that the state is institutionally organized in such a way that it has limited independence from the social classes, especially the hegemonic social class, and is thus entangled in the society's class war. One of the reasons why Nigeria's post-colonial state is incapable of mediating political disagreements is because of this lack of relative sovereignty (Ake, 1985). In other words, the ability to resolve tension and crises is severely limited to the extent that the state is heavily atomized. This explains why government efforts to resolve the Niger Delta conflict (via repression, persuasion, negotiation, and pacification) have always failed.

The post-colonial state is built in such a way that it reflects and caters to a specific set of interests (Ake, 1985). In terms of the Nigerian state, the post-colonial state primarily serves the interests of the Nigerian bourgeoisie and metropolitan capitalists. Ake (1985) asserts that any examination of the post-colonial state must see capital and the state as

being inextricably linked. This is due to the fact that post-colonial regimes rely heavily on foreign money.

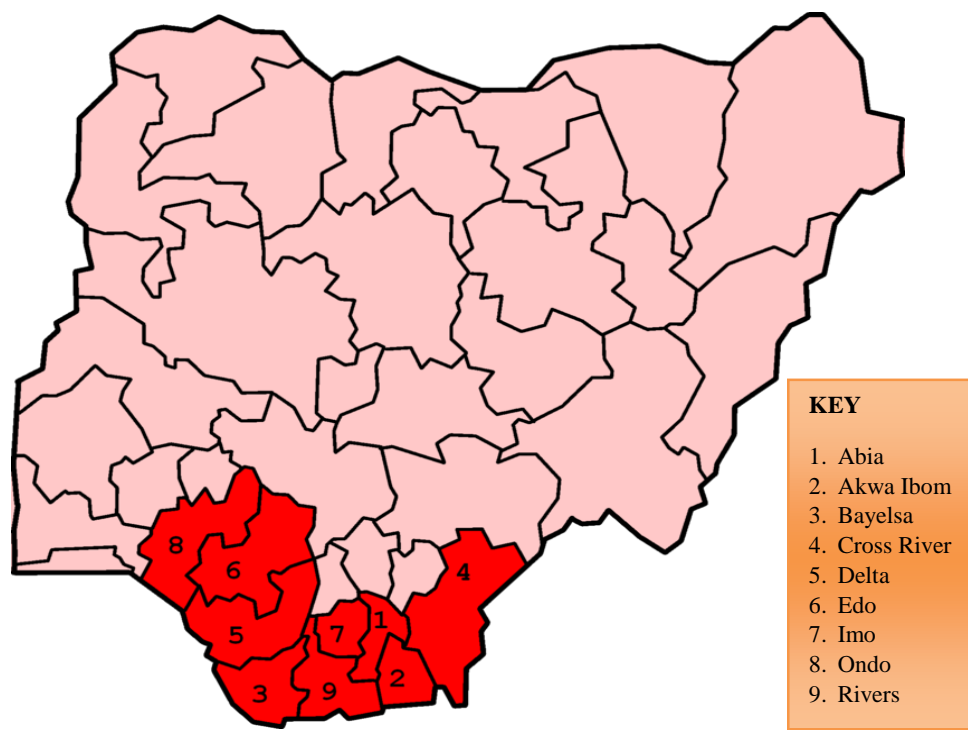
The appropriateness of the post-colonial state theory as a tool of analysis in explaining and comprehending the amnesty offer made to terrorists in the Niger Delta is dependent on its applicability. When Nigeria is considered in its proper neo-colonial state, one that is not only characterized by low autonomy but also solely reliant on the exploration, export, and sale of oil, it can then be seen why the reliance on oil royalties is unavoidable and why the government has resorted to conciliatory approaches such as the amnesty programme, since the use of force to quell the crisis has failed on many occasions to produce any positive results.

### **Methodology**

The documentary design was adopted in the study. Data was elicited from documentary instruments especially from secondary sources through the review of relevant texts, journals, newspapers, official publications, direct observation, media commentaries, and scholarly writings on resource war and amnesty programmes in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Nigeria's Niger Delta is the subject of this research. The Niger Delta is the delta of the River Niger, which lies directly on the Atlantic Ocean's Gulf of Guinea in Nigeria. It is usually considered to be located within nine coastal southern Nigerian states, including all six states from the South-South geopolitical zone (Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Rivers, one state (Ondo) from the South-West geopolitical zone, and two states (Abia and Imo) from the South-East geopolitical zone. These states are indicated in the map of Nigeria in Figure 1.





**Figure 1: Map of Nigeria showing the Study Area.**

**Source:** Researcher's fieldwork, (2021).

Data collected through secondary sources was analysed descriptively based on its quantitative nature. This approach was germane because it enabled us to gain insight into the resource war and amnesty programme in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

## **Analysis and Discussions**

### **Implementation of the amnesty programme**

The examination of the programme could be categorized into three phases. The first phase of the programme began in October 2009 and lasted till November 2009. This was an active phase in which disarmament was undertaken and demobilization began. Apart from complaints from the demobilization camps, there were activities and fair progress. The second phase of the amnesty programme was between December 2009 and May 2010. This period was characterized by inactivity and uncertainty. The programme was undermined by a

shortage of funds and loss of direction and control and was characterized by disillusionment and threats of backsliding into the renewal of hostilities. The third phase, which began in June 2010, involved repackaging and reinvigoration of the programme. In phases, the new programme included activities and plans aimed at ex-militias (*Sunday Vanguard* 2010:39). As previously stated, the execution of the amnesty programme was halted, abandoned, disregarded, or even sabotaged after President Yar'Adua's illness in November 2009. It appeared that the programme was misinterpreted as a Yar'Adua initiative rather than a federal government initiative. Policies, money, structures, and activities were all put on hold pending the president's recuperation. Apart from these issues, there were those of overall poor commitment, poor management, delays, and inactivity. The slow and perhaps unserious implementation may be attributed to problems of planning and execution.

Though the federal government was the main funding partner, the state governments were expected to complement the federal efforts. But it seemed that the commitment and financial support by some state governments was shallow. The Joint Revolutionary Council (JRC) at a point alleged that some governors had refused to fund the post-amnesty programme in their states (*Saturday Sun*, 2010: 11). There were also allegations that the programme had been abandoned by the federal government to the state governments. Federal funding became epileptic and inadequate. Though about ₦50 billion was initially proposed for the programme, only about ₦15 billion was eventually approved. Late President Yar'Adua reportedly approved funds for the third phase before he fell ill. But the funds were not released. This stalled the implementation of the programme. The funds for the amnesty were encapsulated in the 2009 supplementary budget. There were hiccups and delays in the passage of the bill, which was finally passed and given presidential assent in March 2010. It was after this that the sum of ₦9b was released for implementing the programme. Although the programme was awakened and restructured following the consolidation of the Jonathan presidency, the level of funding, commitment, and organizational and managerial effectiveness could not be compared with what it had been. In May 2010, the presidential adviser on the amnesty programme presented a new package and agenda of DDR as a signal of the state of things to come, including the new status, direction, and expectations. To ensure fairly smooth operations, a new planning process

and a new status of self-accounting were implemented. The new bundle gave the amnesty programme a new lease on life (*The Nation*, 2010:1-2).

The then Minister of Defence, Godwin Abe, chaired the Amnesty and Rehabilitation Committee. The Committee was accused of working alone rather than in collaboration with other government arms and agencies, as well as being arrogant (Vanguard, 11/3/2010:7). There was also a special adviser on amnesty in the office of the president. The programme was regarded as the president's initiative. Therefore, while the president was ill, the programme was abandoned, bereft of clear leadership and responsibility, due to the ad hoc character of the amnesty institutions and the fact that it was related to and monitored by the president.

The Amnesty Programme was not backed by a firm and organized administration and a detailed programme of management. The amnesty's DDR was not founded on adequate preparation, and administrative and technical structures. The focus and aims of the implementation structure were murky. The dedication that went into enacting and negotiating the amnesty agreement was not reflected in the rehabilitation phase. Some signs point to the programme's management being disorganized and ineffectual. Some militia leaders believe they were tricked, short-changed, and fooled into surrendering guns and trusting the government's rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives because of existing organizational and administrative deficiencies and their implications. In terms of actualization, the content and promises of the initiative have not been properly realized. Several claims of non-transparency and non-accountability surfaced as a result of the violent protests in Benin, Port Harcourt, and Yenagoa. While in camp, the militants complained about bad accommodation, poor nutrition, non-payment of allowances, and non-delivery of promised benefits.

### **Effects of the amnesty programme of the federal government in the Niger Delta Region**

The first major fallout from the point of the declaration was the cessation of hostilities. There was a MEND ceasefire which lasted until January 2010. As a result of the cessation of hostilities between the government troops and armed militias, there was relative peace, security, and stability in the region. Since the amnesty, oil production has steadily risen. It rose from about 1million bpd in early 2009 to about 2.1m bpd by

October 2009, and 2.5m bpd by March 2010. Oil production peaked after the amnesty, compared to the period of intense militant insurgency that began in 2004. Most of the oil companies such as Shell and Chevron-Texaco returned to hitherto abandoned sites. Furthermore gas production recovered; even the refineries at Warri and Port Harcourt resumed production (Ikelegbe, 2010:67). The increased production and export of oil and gas translated to more revenue and higher growth of the gross domestic product, the economy, as well as higher foreign direct investments into the region. The 2010 budget was predicated on 2.3m bpd and \$67 per barrel. This was built on the hope of increased production in the post-amnesty period, which hope was eventually realized. The other effect of the amnesty has been improvement in the security and stability of the region. Though there were some incidents of pipeline vandalization in the Batan and Forcados areas of Delta State in December 2009 during the unilateral ceasefire (Ikelegbe, 2010:67), and some incidents of attacks in Delta and Rivers states after the amnesty took effect, these were however insignificant compared to the pre-amnesty declaration period. The human security situation has improved as a result of fewer attacks, the cessation of kidnapping of oil workers, and a reduction in youth restlessness.

The DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration) programme is one of the most important methods for ending wars and managing post-conflict situations globally. The United Nations and other such organizations have utilized this method as a tool for securing long-term peace (Omotayo, 2016), hence the Nigerian Government's decision to use the procedure in its amnesty programme in the Niger Delta. The amnesty programme was divided into three stages: disarming and demobilization of militants, rehabilitation and integration of ex-militants, and a post-amnesty package of massive infrastructural development. The disarmed militants were transported to predetermined collection places and camps in six Niger Delta states, where they were promised a monthly stipend of ₦65,000 (about \$407) as well as rent payment and vocational training (Oluwaniyi, 2011). Several militants surrendered rifles and ammunition during the implementation of the first phase. Indeed, the amnesty offer was accepted by 26,358 militants (first phase – 20,192 militants representing those that accepted the offer on or before 4th October 2009, while the second phase of the amnesty programme which occurred in November 2010 comprised 6,166 militants, this represents those that accepted the offer). The first phase of the Amnesty Programme

seems to have reduced the number of conflicts in the region, as well as the stockpiling and influx of weapons by militants. The second stage included several rehabilitation centres that were specifically designed to satisfy the ex-militants' training demands. Because the centres could only handle a limited number of registered ex-militants, the training was done in batches. Each batch of ex-militants was scheduled to spend four weeks in the rehabilitation programme, which included reorientation, counselling, and moral/spiritual regeneration (Akinwale, 2010).

A poll of ex-militants' job goals demonstrated a strong preference for roughly ten (10) industries, ranging from Oil and Gas to Maritime Services, Fabrication and Welding Technology, Exploration and Production, and Processing Engineering, with training durations ranging from three to eighteen months (Akinwale, 2010). Those desiring to return to school for higher education were also offered the opportunity. The DDR can be systematically analysed as follows:

#### **A. Disarmament**

Military troops, mainly the Nigerian Army, were in charge of the disarmament effort in the Niger Delta. Large amounts of cash, arms, and ammunition recovered were stockpiled in the 82 Division of the Nigerian Army in Enugu State before the ex-militants were enlisted into the post-amnesty programme, in accordance with the UN's DDR rules.

Over 2,500 advanced firearms and 300,000 rounds of ammunition were turned in by 15,000 ex-agitators (Akinwale, 2010). Ex-militants in Delta and Bayelsa states surrendered a total of 39,880 assorted weaponry and ammunition, including 482 automatic weapons, 20,132 ammunitions, 295 magazines, and 18,971 locally-made guns. Similarly, 82,406 rounds of ammunition were seized in Rivers State, while 9,748 rounds were recovered in Cross River, 9,725 rounds in Ondo State, 959 rounds in Akwa Ibom State, and 722 rounds in Edo State (Uzodinma, 2013; Utebor, 2016).

Ex-militants, on the other hand, surrendered far fewer weapons and ammunition than those confiscated at the screening centres. Despite these, they carried out a series of strikes throughout the disarmament exercise, raising the question of what happened to the remaining arms not surrendered. The oil-rich regions are likely to remain insecure and at

risk of relapsing into violent conflict as long as the remaining armaments are still in the possession of the ex-militants.

## **B. Demobilization**

The second component of the DDR programme was the demobilization phase. Identification, biometrics, paperwork, and verification of ex-militants at designated Amnesty Programme camps were undertaken as part of the procedure for demobilization. Each agitator received a monthly stipend as part of the scheme. During the process, the Aluu camp was classified as a disarmament centre, with a capacity of just 800 ex-militants out of a total of 7000 (Ikelegbe, 2010). Due to inadequate organization and oversight, there was also a shortage of bed space and amenities. Housing was only provided for a select few at the Aluu camp while most of the other rehabilitation centres were empty and not in use due to the accommodation system put in place.

The Obubra camp was a demobilization camp for disarmed ex-militants, where they received nonviolence transformative training as part of the re-integration programme. Security was tight at the camp, with around 200 security agents, including 13 amphibious brigades, 120 soldiers, 60 mobile police officers, 20 conventional police officers, and 10 Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps members (NSCDC). The ex-militants were thoroughly screened by security officers before entering the camp to ensure that none of them entered with weapons or ammunition, and to ensure a smooth demobilization process.

As a result of the substandard facilities and accommodation, the terrible living conditions, unpaid stipends and allowances, and a disregard for the processes for effectual rehabilitation, the camp was not without protest and unrest in some parts, particularly Port Harcourt. Ex-militants were released after a number of weeks to be reintegrated into society, but the procedure did little to demobilize them.

## **C. Reintegration**

There are various aspects to reintegration. These are:

- social (resettlement into post-war communities),
- economic ("financial independence of an ex-household combatant through production and gainful employment),

- psychological (adjustment of attitudes and expectations and recovery from conflict-related psychological trauma),
- political (acceptance of ex-fighters by communities, community leaders, and integration into a democratic society), and
- psychological adjustment (Kingma, 2000: 28).

Ex-agitators who had completed transformational training benefited greatly from the Presidential Amnesty Programme's (PAP's) reintegration and reinsertion phase. Many ex-militants were offered vocational training, business training and development, technical capabilities, formal education, and the opportunity to participate as change agents in a larger community. More importantly, the programme was divided into two sections. The first step was the rehabilitation programme, which included around 19,000 ex-militants who were trained at Obubra Camp for 3 to 18 months. With the help of a councillor, they were educated about violent conflict and nonviolent methods, as well as conflict management in general, as a weapon for peace. The breakdown of ex-militants trained at Obubra Camp is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Ex-Militants Trained in Obubra Camp in Rivers State**

S/N	States	No. of ex-militants
1.	Rivers	7015
2.	Bayelsa	6793
3.	Delta	3320
4.	Ondo	1303
5.	Edo	459
6.	Akwa Ibom	188
7.	Cross Rivers	172
<b>Total</b>		<b>19,576</b>

*Source:* Researchers' fieldwork, 2021.

The second phase comprised psychological counselling to assist the ex-militants in deciding what kind of job or educational training they desired, (Ajodo-Adebanjo, 2017). The programme also assisted them in areas such as sea faring, piloting, ICT, and ocean diving; with those who wished to return to school being able to do so in countries such as the

United Arab Emirates, Ghana, Israel, Russia, Ukraine, the Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, South Africa, Singapore, and others. Ex-militants were also assisted with capital and other resources. Table 2 shows the number of ex-militants trained in various vocational skills.

**Table 2: Ex-Militants Trained in Vocational Skills**

S/N	Skills	Numbers
1.	Agricultural construction	239
2.	Automobile	207
3.	Welding and Fabrication	2204
4.	Entrepreneurship	2798
5.	Carpentry and Plumbing	298
6.	Oil Drilling and Marine Engineering	916
7.	Electrical Installation	89
8.	ICT	273
9.	Crane and Heavy-duty Machine construction	1030
10.	Boat building	299
11.	Pipe fitting	250
12.	Entertainment	60
13.	Others	618
<b>Total</b>		<b>9,192</b>

*Source:* Researchers' fieldwork (2021).

For the vocational training, 2,204 ex-militants completed the welding and fabrication course, 2,798 completed small-scale business or entrepreneurial training, while 916 completed oil drilling training and marine engineering courses and programmes. A further 299 graduates trained in boat construction, 1,030 in crane and heavy-duty construction, and 239 in agricultural construction.

In 2014, the PAP trained 66 plane and helicopter pilots as well as 61 aviation maintenance engineers in Europe, Africa, and Asia. The Federal Government, through the Presidential Amnesty Office (PAO) worked with a number of individuals, business bodies, and organizations



both at home and abroad to find ways to employ ex-militants who had completed various skills acquisition programmes. In support of its efforts, the Nigerian Army hired 10 ex-militants, the Nigerian Customs Service hired 6, SAP Drilling Oil and Gas Limited hired 5, and Schlumberger hired 29 of them automatically when they completed their training. In a similar vein, a total of 113 ex-militants were also engaged: Century Energy Group hired 40 maritime trainees in Nigeria, Plant and Processing Service Company hired 4, Ashland Investment Service hired 5 in South Africa, Learning Resources hired 10 in Ghana, and Dubai hired 30 for their outstanding conduct and performance; while another 24 were hired as maritime trainees (Omokhoa, 2015:355). It should be emphasized here that it was through the courageous effort of Nigeria's Vice-President, Professor Yemi Osibanjo, that tension was doused in the Niger Delta area between 2015 and 2017.

### **Conclusion**

In the case of the Niger Delta, resource war may be considered a case of deprivation of what is rightfully in the interest of the public. The endless battle has raged because of the greed of a select few who wield political power in the country, amassing vast fortunes at the expense of the masses' well-being. One cannot promote criminality, but it should be noted that the problem of militancy, which is used by a state or region as a political instrument to obtain a piece of the national cake, is also a way for people to show their fury to those who they believe have cheated them.

As a result of the foregoing, we conclude that Nigeria's resource control system has a negative impact on people's lives, which is the root of most resource conflicts in the country. The issue is unrelated to the cash earned by oil sales or the scarcity of resources. The government's disregard for the people, maladministration, resource waste, exploitation of the common purse, revenue looting by public officials, and corruption are all contributing factors. These elements combine to cause disagreement and hiccups in Nigeria's resource control system. Nigeria will not be a strong and cohesive federation until its constituent parts (states) are appropriately empowered by enabling practices that adhere to federalism objectives. As a result, the push for resource control is motivated by a desire to foster fiscal federalism, as it is practiced in other countries with federal governments. This is the most successful way to

cope with ethnic variety in a country like Nigeria, as well as the most effective way to free Nigerians from the lingering effects of military tyranny and misrule.

### **Policy Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made based on the discussion above.

- First, agitation for resource control should be done through discourse, diplomacy, and superior argument rather than by people using violence to demand for their rights.
- Second, government should fulfil its obligations and promises to solve the environmental difficulties posed by oil exploration activities in the Niger Delta region, since this will contribute to regional peace.
- Third, the government and all key stakeholders must confront the hydra-headed monster of corruption head-on in order to avert the breakdown of law and order in the region.
- Fourth, Nigeria will not be a strong and cohesive federation unless and until its constituent units (states) are appropriately empowered through enabling practices that are consistent with federalism principles.
- Fifth, the amnesty programme should be allowed to run its course in order to address the regional challenge of youth militancy and promote peace and unity within the country.
- Sixth, efforts must be made to lift the people of the Niger Delta out of poverty, which is exacerbated by a damaged environment, poor health, poor education, inadequate infrastructure, and a low standard of living.

## References

- Afinotan, L. A. & Ojakorotu, V. (2009). The Niger Delta crisis: Issues, challenges and prospects. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 3(5), 191-198.
- Ajodo-Adebanjo, A. (2017). Towards ending conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta Region. Accord, 13 September. Available at [www.reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/towards-ending-conflict-and-insecurity-niger-delta-region](http://www.reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/towards-ending-conflict-and-insecurity-niger-delta-region)
- Ake C. (1985). Social science as imperialism. London: Longman
- Akinwale, A. A. (2010). Amnesty and human capital development agenda for the Niger Delta. *Journal of African Studies and Development*, 2(8), 201-207.
- Alavi H. (1972). The state in post-colonial societies. New Left Review, <https://newleftreview.org/issues/i74/articles/hamza-alavi-the-state-in-post-colonial-societies-pakistan-and-bangladesh>
- Ibeanu, O. (1999). Exiles in their own home: conflicts and internal population displacement in Nigeria. *Journal of Refugee Studies - J REFUG STUD*. 12. 161-179. 10.1093/jrs/12.2.161.
- Ikelegbe, A. (2010). Resolving the Niger Delta Conflict: A Critical and Comparative Analysis of the Amnesty and Post Amnesty Challenges. A paper presented at the 2nd International Conference of the Niger Delta. Hosted by the Department of Political Science, Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State in Collaboration with the Centre for Applied Environmental Research, University of Missouri, Kansas, United States (March 8 – 11, 2010).
- Odeke, F.C., Agumuo, K.O., & Chukwulet, C.O. (2021). The Niger Delta in historical perspective, 1800-1960. *International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Literature (IMPACT: IJRHAL)*, 9(4), 75-86.
- Oluwaniyi, O. (2011). Post-Amnesty Programme in the Niger Delta: Challenges and Prospects in Conflict Trend (46-54).
- Omokhoa, I.E. (2015). Revisiting the peace-building efforts in post conflict Niger Delta, Nigeria: A case study of the Amnesty Programme. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(6), 349-359.
- Omotayo, Y. (2016). Army storm Bayelsa to stop declaration of Niger Delta Republic. *Leadership Newspaper*, Abuja, 1 August.

- Osaghae, E.E. (1991). The Ogoni uprising: Oil politics, minority agitation and the future of the Nigerian state. *African Affairs*, 94: 325-344.
- O'Shea, A. (2002). *Amnesty for Crime in International Law and Practice*. Leiden, NLD: Brill Academic Publishers.
- Owugah, L. (1999). Local resistance and the state. Paper presented at Oil Watch Africa General Assembly, February 9 - 14, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
- Ukiwo, U. (2011). The Nigerian state, oil and the Niger Delta. In C. Obi & S.A. Rustard, (Eds.), *Oil and Insurgency in the Niger Delta: Managing the complex politics of petro- violence*. London/New York: Zed Books.
- Utebor, S. (2016). Army set to deploy 10,000 soldiers in Niger Delta. *The Punch*, 9 September.
- Uzodinma, E. (2013). Amnesty: Taskforce hands over 39,880 assorted arms and Ammunition to Nigeria Army. *The Daily*, March 16.
- Vanguard*. (2010). Comment: Fragile Niger Delta. December 29, pp: 18.
- The Federal Republic of Nigeria. (1999). *1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*. Abuja: Federal Government Printers.
- Wikipedia. (2018). Map of Nigeria showing states typically considered part of the Niger Delta Region. [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org).