

CHAPTER III
CONFLICT BETWEEN
OIL INDUSTRY AND PEOPLE OF NIGER DELTA

After the previous chapter describes the overview of Niger Delta Region and the oil exploration in the Niger Delta, this chapter will discuss about the conflict that occurred in Niger Delta and also provide information about the beginning of the conflict, the timeline of conflict, the actors or conflicting parties, the militancy group along with the timeline of attack by the groups.

A. The Timeline of the Conflict

The conflict between oil industry companies and people in the Niger Delta region commenced in 1990, but still continue to happen until the present. The followings will describe the timeline detailed of the conflict that occurred from the beginning of 2006 to 2016. The Niger Delta which has a rich amount of its oil resources, is a gift that may help regional development and welfare of the community in that area but it may just be a mere expectation. When the oil industry began to enter the area of the Niger Delta, all seemed good. Until not long after that, there was a group of ethnic minorities who felt aggrieved because the exploitation of the area around their residence. Oil was first enormously discovered at Oloibiri where The Ijaw and Ogoni tribal lived. The Ijaw and Ogonis tribal are felt aggrieved because the areas of the Niger Delta had already turned into the oil-producing areas. The two tribes were hampered

by foreign oil companies operating there and the tension has been going on since 1990 and then.

The Ogoni minority ethnic has lived in one of region in the Niger Delta for about 500 years ago. They called their living area as the Ogoni-land. Ogoniland is located in the east of Port Harcourt in the River States. The daily life of Ogoni people is fulfilled by farming and fishing activities. Yam and cassava farming are important ways of making a living, although the income of these products does not cover up their daily necessities. The most important export product of Nigeria is oil. Port Harcourt become an area for shipping and oil export. However, the Ogoni people have never profited from these exports. Ogoniland's agricultural production has now been severely reduced. Large areas of fresh and salt water resources as fishing grounds have also been rendered uselessly as the impact from the oil industry activities. Food is becoming increasingly expensive and potential farmers are too poor to pay for seeds and labor.

There are oil companies that located in the region of Port Harcourt. Both of these companies are Shell and Chevron. Considering the land and their livelihood taken away by the activities of oil companies, the Ogoni people had gathered and made a movement to keep struggling to get their rights. They formed the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) in 1992 and was headed by Ken Saro-Wiwa. Still at the same year, the conflict between the Ogoni people with the oil company experienced an escalation that took time in December. This made the feud to be more intense. MOSOP then took steps

to an ultimatum to the Shell oil companies, Chevron and even against the Nigerian Government-owned oil company that was Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation or shortened to NNPC. The ultimatum contained that MOSOP demanded a compensation as much as \$10 billion dollars. In addition to demanding a number of punitive damages, they also asked the oil companies to the cessation of the immediate environmental degradation as well as negotiation for mutual agreement on all future drilling activities.

The Ogoni also did some action that threatened to destroy the oil company when their request was not supplied. Actually, it was intended as a protest against the Government and also as a threat to oil companies. Government take immediate action, and later declared that the disruption of oil production was performed by a militancy group.

Another ethnic tribe that has a problem with oil companies is the Ijaw ethnics. The Ijaw is indigenous people who lives mostly in the regions of the Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers States within the Niger Delta in Nigeria. In 1998, the Ijaw youth tribe formed an Ijaw Youth Conference which is meant to control the access to natural resources. They also make a declaration named Kaiama. The content of the Declaration stated that “all land and natural resources (including mineral resources) within the territory of the Ijaw are belong to Ijaw communities”. Furthermore, the content of Kaiama Declaration is as follows:

Ijaw youths in all the communities in all Ijaw clans in the Niger Delta will take steps to implement these resolutions beginning from the 30th of December, 1998, as a step towards reclaiming the control of our lives. We, therefore, demand that all oil companies stop all exploration and exploitation activities in the Ijaw area. We are tired of gas flaring; oil spillages, blowouts and being labeled saboteurs and terrorists. It is a case of preparing the noose for our hanging. We reject this labelling. Hence, we advise all oil companies staff and contractors to withdraw from Ijaw territories by the 30th December, 1998 pending the resolution of the issue of resource ownership and control in the Ijaw area of the Niger Delta (UnitedIjaw, n.d.).

The conflict died down after so long, then it arose again in 2003. The rise of the conflict that happened was pioneered by the emergence of the militancy group called Niger Delta people volunteer force (NDVPF). NDPVF group was formed by the former President of the Ijaw Youth Council namely Mujahid Dokubo Asari with a goal to have complete control of the oil resources on a regional basis. In 2004, NDPVF started its action with the operating mode of Operation Locust Feast. These operations indeed targeted at making oil companies shut down production.

During August to September 2004, there was a shootout between the militant groups in the region of the city of Port Harcourt. Later was knocked out quickly by the army. According to Amnesty International Rumored to 500 people were killed. However, the authorities stated only 20 people died (BBC, 2017).

Two years after the incidence of NDPVF, currently in 2006, a new militant group was formed. The Movement of the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) is a group that represents or overarches goals several small

militant groups to come under one large group. MEND appeared to public with their actions attacking oil pipelines, oil facilities and also kidnapping foreign oil workers. MEND demanded control over the regions that rich oil.

In the following year specifically on September 14, 2008 MEND declared oil war in Niger Delta and on May 15, 2009 MEND remained declaring war but the president later offered an amnesty for a militant group who was responsible for the attacks on oil, kidnapping of foreign oil workers and pipeline bombing. Since the offers from president were given, MEND later declared a 60-day ceasefire against oil industry and took to come for peace talks with the government. After the peace talks with government, MEND approved to extend the ceasefire with 30 days only because the amnesty that had been given by the government did not address the issue.

In January 2010 MEND had ended its ceasefire and not long since its ceasefire, two bombs were exploded in Warri. This explosion was addressed to Government House of Nigeria during the Amnesty Dialogue. The attack by MEND still continued to happen in November. MEND attacked Exxon Mobil oil platform and kidnapped seven Nigerian oil workers and they also had sabotaged the oil pipeline refinery in Warri, Niger Delta.

One year later, MEND kept doing its attack to oil industry. In this time, MEND had exploded a bomb to oil platform that was owned by Oil Company Agip. This attack was the first action MEND took in 2011. Not only attacking oil facilities, MEND also continuously kidnapped oil workers plus attempted

to hijack some oil carrier. The attack kept going until 2013. Thus there were many terror actions made by MEND, exceeding until the previous years (IRIN, 2010).

The existence of the movement for the emancipation of the Niger Delta people (MEND) has dimmed, but the insurgency in the Niger Delta still occurs coupled with the presence of Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) in 2016. In February 10, 2016 the first attack that was done by NDA.

B. The Actors or Conflicting Parties

The actor or conflicting parties who were involved in this conflict consisting of the Government, Oil Companies and People of the Niger Delta. The Federal Government of Nigeria and the oil companies are the party to that conflict with the Niger Delta peoples. The Federal Government conflicted with the Niger Delta people because the Government could not provide a values development of the region and also many problems arising due to their own policies.

Furthermore, the conflicted parties were oil companies. Oil companies located and operating in the Niger Delta were the parties which are believed to be the main targets of the militant group. Since 1992, Shell since 1992 has been known to have a history of conflict against the ethnic Ogoni. Even in the past decades, the conflict between the Ogoni people with Royal Dutch Shell has experienced an escalation of the conflict to a more serious level. In addition, a

number of oil companies such as Chevron, Agip, and Exxon also often become the targets of attack from a militant group.

From the people in the Niger Delta side, the parties involved in the conflict earlier before the existence of the militancy or insurgency groups are the ethnic groups. Ethnic groups who were harmed due to the oil industry in the Niger Delta are the ethnic of Ijaw and Ogoni. Then, since 2006, the oil companies couldn't have dealt in conflict with the militancy groups. Those groups called as the Movement for the emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and also Niger Delta Avengers (NDA).

C. The Disappointment of Niger Delta People

The disappointment of Niger Delta people who then pushed them into a militant group began with the failure of the Government in the realization of what the people in the Niger Delta believe that it actually happened or in other words is the existence of changes to the conditions of their lives. The Government assessed failed to build a modern development and also failed to address grievances leveled by the society. The condition of the people in the Niger Delta over the years suffered deterioration. The above things then compounded with powerful and oil companies operating in the region along with the continues exploitation of oil. In addition, the Government is more in favor of the oil companies than with the welfare of the citizens. Moreover, the Government refused to listen to the aspirations of the people to which the people ask for equity in the channel distribution of wealth of oil and gas

triggered frustration, anger, rebellion, which led to conflict with the militancy in Niger Delta (Inokoba & Imbua, 2010).

The disappointment that continues to haunt the citizens then leads to frustration. Because it was not put up with the conditions that made them constantly derailed, the disappointment finally culminated with the formation of the armed insurgency group. According to the source, which is not known explicitly, the Niger Delta youths confessed that they joined a group of militant because with a strong belief in social justice, equity, and fairness. Also, as the origins people who lived in the area, they had to struggle to obtain the rights allocated to them. The armed and militant groups were identified as a struggle against the injustice done by the country. These groups used violence intentionally as an effort in waging their disappointment action.

Thus, it is no doubt that a conflict between people and communities in the Niger Delta caused by the presence of oil along with the exploitation by oil companies.

D. Militancy Groups in Niger Delta

When the conflict took place between ethnic groups and oil companies deemed to have subsided, in fact a number of militant groups was formed and growing high. This militant group claimed to have the goal to fight for the return of their territories. They did the action of resistance by means of kidnapping of oil company workers and then asked for ransom as a pretext. Not only the action of kidnapping, but also stealing oil from the oil companies.

Below are the militancy groups involved in the conflict in the Niger Delta along with oil companies:

1. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)

The country that has abundant natural resources like oil tend to experience a resource curse. Since the presence of oil companies operating in the Niger Delta, the denial and resistance to oil companies and the Government are getting high and increasingly. In the early 2006, there was a militant group who was crowned as the largest armed militant groups which was based in Port Harcourt, Niger Delta region. The militant groups were called as the Movement for emancipation of the Niger Delta or shortened as MEND. According to BBC, The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) is a loose web of armed groups in Nigeria's oil-producing Niger Delta region (BBC, 2010). The appearance of MEND is objectively to cripple the oil companies operating in Niger Delta.

Originally, MEND was indicated as the continuation of the previous armed group which is NDPVF or Niger Delta People's Volunteer. NDPVF is categorized as the largest armed groups that consists of the Ijaw ethnic who lives in the regions of the Delta. The information on how to recruit MEND's members cannot be found. However, these militant group are easily recruit people to be a member based on the socio and economic matter. MEND was also created in cooperation between various militant structures of the Delta, including the NDPVF, as an interface to their common demands.

According to Guardian, the establishment MEND refers to events in the past in 2004 when Mujahid Dokubu-Asari as leader of the group declared a war on Nigeria's Federal Government over misuse of their area of residence. After declaring the war, a year later, Asari was arrested for treason. Since the incident, MEND made their appearance in 2006 began with the invasion and attacks on facilities of Shell company. This group was also equipped with good weapons (McGreal, 2007).

For obvious strategic reasons, organizational structure and MEND command mode were not certainly known. According to available data, the MEND is not a unitary structure but is more akin to a flexible coordination. A coalition of different groups or regions factions can carry out their activities independently, with a specific purpose, under the MEND name. The MEND leaders using the pseudonym worked underground or hid to keep their anonymity.

Multiple sources stated that the MEND's purpose was not only to control over oil resources in the Niger Delta, but also demanded their leaders to be released from the prison and the government should withdraw the military troops from Niger Delta. Besides this aim, MEND also demanded political representation and autonomy for Niger Delta people. Some Nigeria experts said that the group's demands have progressed to an interest in taking part in the political process. Obasi said that the group issued a statement asking for a certain number of seats in the Niger Delta legislature and in the National

Assembly, which shows themselves perhaps even as a legitimate political party (Hanson, 2007).

MEND financially would draw a large part of its resources in the practice of bunkering wild extraction of oil from pipelines - representing hundreds of thousands of barrels per day, or 10 percent of Nigeria's daily production. The Oil stolen from pipelines and smuggled across West Africa would yield hundreds of millions of dollars to the rebels and various smuggling networks (Luntumbue, 2011).

The activities of MEND are various. The Sources indicate that MEND's main tactic is the kidnapping of foreign oil company employees in order to negotiate with oil companies and the government. MEND has been actively linked on the exploding of oil company infrastructure. Another activity that MEND did are sabotage, oil bunkering, theft of oil pipeline, destruction, guerilla warfare and the most intense activity of MEND is to kidnap the oil company employer.

The following is the summary of a timeline of MEND attack activities from 2006 to 2013:

1. January 10, 2006: Militants kidnap 4 foreign oil workers from Shell's offshore oilfield. They also blow up crude oil pipelines, cutting supplies to Forcados export terminal by 100,000 bpd.
2. On May 10, 2006, an executive with the United States-based oil company Baker Hughes was shot and killed in the south-eastern city

of Port Harcourt. Witnesses say the attacker appeared to be specifically targeting the US executive.

3. On October 2, 2006, 10 Nigerian soldiers were killed off the shore of the Niger Delta in their patrol boat by a MEND mortar shell. Earlier that day a Nigerian/Royal Dutch Shell convoy was attacked in the Port Harcourt region resulting in some people being wounded.
4. July 10, 2009 MEND attacks an oil pipeline recently repaired by U.S. oil major Chevron.
5. Jan. 30, 2010 – MEND calls off its ceasefire, threatening to unleash “an all-out assault” on the Delta.
6. Sept. 22, 2011 - Three Frenchmen working for marine services supplier Bourbon are kidnapped by gunmen off their vessel.
7. Oct. 1, 2011 - Car bombs explode near a parade marking Nigeria's 50th anniversary of independence, killing at least 10 people. MEND claims responsibility the next day, saying the car bombs are intended as a one-off symbolic strike rather than the start of a campaign of violence.
8. Nov. 8, 2011 - Gunmen attack the shallow-water Okoro field off Akwa Ibom state, Africa's biggest producing oilfield, kidnapping five crew members including foreigners and injuring two others.
9. October. 19, 2011 - MEND gunmen hijacked the ExxonMobil tanker *AHST Wilbert Tide* near Opobo. The gunmen kidnapped the captain before stealing large amounts of oil.
10. February. 4, 2012 - MEND militants sabotage an oil pipeline belonging to Agip in Bayelsa State.
11. December. 30, 2012 - MEND gunmen attacked an oil barge operated by Agip in Rivers State.

12. March. 4, 2013 - MEND militants were responsible for sabotaging an oil pipeline operated by Royal Dutch Shell.
13. July. 14, 2013 - Militants detonate and destroy a crude oil pipeline in Rivers State. The perpetrators are thought to affiliated to MEND. (IRIN, 2010)

Analyzing the emergence of MEND and its modus operandi, Shadi Bushra observes that the organization was a child of necessity because

“all manners of peacefully resisting the environmental, social, and economic degradation of their country at the hands of the oil companies have proven to be futile. As such, their only recourse has been the violent and mutually unbeneficial “war on oil companies”. Shadi further noted that MEND’s activities “may have led to the loss of lives, destruction of oil facilities, kidnap of foreign nationals and instability in the region, but their ultimate aim is to free the Niger Delta and its people from the vicious grip of the MNOCs and a corrupt and irresponsible government” (Bushra, 2009).

In 2009, president Goodluck Jonathan issued presidential amnesty program with the goal of keeping the militant group handed over all weapons and made peace with the Government with a duration of 60 days from August 6 to October 4. In the end of the Militant group MEND agreed with the programs offered by the Government and got their monthly payments and the contracts for guarding the pipelines.

2. Niger Delta Avengers (NDA)

The name of the Niger Delta avengers appeared to public in 2016.

Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) was claimed to be the latest militant group that

emerged in Niger Delta region. Niger Delta Avengers consisted of “well-educated and well-traveled individuals that are poised to take the struggle of Niger Delta region to new heights that has never been seen this nation before” as it was retrieved from Niger Delta Avengers website (Niger Delta Avengers, n.d.).

The emergence of the NDA militant group actually with the same purpose as the militant group that was firstly formed in the previous few years. Although it is not clear to whom they rebelled, some sources say that the NDA wants a better deal from both parties (the oil company or Government) to those who suffered due to such environmental damage oil production, the economy still remains derailed due to the injustice committed by the Government.

A certain amount of damage to oil production facilities in the Delta has been performed by an NDA. According to BBC In February, it blew up an underwater pipeline forcing Royal Dutch Shell to shut down a terminal which normally produces 250,000 barrels of oil a day (bpd) (BBC, 2016). After doing the damage action against the oil companies, the NDA then declared that their main goal now is to make the Niger Delta into a sovereign State and independence from Nigeria. Nigeria rely his economic on oil sector and with the oil sector also Nigeria is capable of being a country that its economic development growth rapidly than other African countries. The attack by NDA of course it will cripple the economy of Nigeria in the correct case.

It is remaining unclear who the leader of the NDA group is. However, the Niger Delta Avengers has a number of demands and complaints addressed to the Federal Government of Nigeria. The following is a number of demands and complaints:

1. Immediate implementation of the report of the 2014 National Conference.
2. Change in ownership of oil blocks to reflect 60% for individuals from oil producing regions and 40% for individuals from non-oil producing regions.
3. Commencement of academic activities at the Maritime University in Delta state.
4. Clean-up of Ogoniland and other polluted areas, and payment of compensation to all oil producing communities.
5. The release of Nnamdi Kanu, the detained leader of the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB).
6. Continuation and funding of the Niger Delta Presidential Amnesty Program.
7. Anti-corruption fight should be extended to members of the ruling party(APC).
8. MNOC and foreign investors must adhere to its ultimatum (Babatunde, Norafidah, & Tapiwa, 2016).

When they are examined more thoroughly, the attacks carried out by militant group is different from those performed by the other militant groups. The NDA is very proficient in drawing up the strategy, as well as their group

which is very sophisticated. The action and the attack by NDA just focused on the oil companies. It is certainly in contrast with the militant MEND members that did the kidnapping and also killed oil workers. This can be proved by the recent timeline of NDA Attacks:

1. February 10, 2016: NDA blew up Bonny Soku Gas Export Line.
2. February 13, 2016: NDA attacked SPDC underwater 48- inch crude oil export pipeline at Forcados Export Terminal in Delta state.
3. February 19, 2016: NDA bombed the Clough Creek Tebidaba Agip pipeline manifold in Bayelsa State.
1. May 4, 2016: NDA attacks a Chevron Valve Platform at Abiteye in Delta State.
2. May 5, 2016: NDA launches a coordinated attack on Chevron's Well D25 in Abiteye and blew up major pipelines in Delta state.
3. May 13, 2016: NDA blew up Chevron pipeline and oil well near a military location in Makaraba in Delta state.
4. May 17, 2016: The Red Egbesu Water Lions blew up the Sagbama-Tuomo gas line belonging to Nigeria Agip Oil Company in Southern Ijaw in Bayelsa state.
5. May 20, 2016: NDA blew up NNPC's Escravos Gas Pipeline in Delta state.
6. May 22, 2016: A militant group attacked a crude oil pipeline belonging to Agip oil Company along the Azuzuama axis of the Tebidaba Brass pipeline in Bayelsa state.
7. May 25, 2016: NDA attacked a Chevron gas pipeline that provides electricity to the Escravos Tank Farm at Ciera creek in Delta.

8. May 26, 2016: NDA blew up NNPC gas and crude trunk line in Warri, Delta state.
9. May 27, 2016: NDA destroys the Nembe 1, 2 and 3 Brass to Bonny trunk lines belonging to Agip Oil Company and SPDC in Bayelsa state.
10. June 1, 2016: NDA carried two coordinated attacks on Chevron's Wells RMP 23 and RMP 24 at Dibi in Delta state.
11. June 2, 2016: NDA bombed the Ogboinbiri to Tebidaba and the Clough Creek to Tebidaba crude oil pipelines in Bayelsa state.
12. June 2, 2016: Militants attacked a boat belonging to NNPC and killed six people comprising four civilians and two soldiers in Warri, Delta state.
13. June 3, 2016: NDA blew up SPDC Forcados 48-inch export pipeline in Delta because the company went ahead with repairs against warnings by the militants.
14. June 3, 2016: NDA blew up Brass to Tebidaba crude oil lines operated by SPDC and Italy's ENI in Bayelsa state.
15. June 8, 2016: NDA attacked Chevron operated RMP 20 well at Egbema in Delta state.
16. June 9, 2016: Militants bombed an oil manifold owned by SPDC along Chanomi creek in Ogidigben, Delta state.
17. June 10, 2016: NDA bombed the Obi Obi oil trunk line owned by Agip ENI in Bayelsa state (PIND, 2016).

The movements and activities of groups of NDA were still very active in conducting his terror action. A news sourced from Vanguard said the NDA gives warning against the Federal Government and they will still conduct bombings against oil facilities if the Government made a mistake further in negotiations when they represent the Government but not representing the community. The NDA considers that the Federal Government does not want to represent the communities of the Niger Delta. This is not a solution that is beneficial to the community as well as the demands and requests submitted were not granted. Therefore, the NDA will still do a terror until the demands and requests were answered.

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