

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is very strategic to the country's economic and political existence. This is explained by the fact that the country's oil resources which account for 90 per cent of her foreign exchange earnings and about 80 per cent of the budgetary revenue, come from the area (Nigeria Economy Profile, 2012). Misconceptions and controversies had earlier trailed the definition of the area referred to as the Niger Delta. These misconceptions and controversies stemmed from the discovery of crude oil at Olibiri, in present Bayelsa State in commercial quantities in 1958. However, the Niger Delta as currently defined is synonymous with the oil producing areas in the country.

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo who in his bill creating the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), listed the nine oil producing states of Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross Rivers, Delta, Edo, Imo, Rivers and Ondo as member states of the region. NDDC (2000:1) in its definition of the area states: "the Niger Delta region traverses nine out of the 36 states making up the Federal Republic of Nigeria. These are: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayesla, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers State". Alamieyeseigha (2005) also subscribes to this definition by observing that the Niger Delta in its present form covers these states.

But flaws in the above definition and description of the area are made bare by historical account. Onduku (2001:3) notes that:

The Niger Delta as a region predates Nigeria's emergence as a British Colony by at least a decade. Britain's Niger Delta Protectorate and the Niger Delta Coast Protectorate were already well established by the middle of 1880s and

the late 1890s before further British interests led to the formation of Southern Nigeria in 1900.

Alagoa (1979) and Ekeh (2004) give credence to this view when they affirm that the Niger Delta dates back to around 1480s, during the period of Portuguese exploration of the West Coast of Africa. According to Ekeh “the Portuguese were a sea faring people and mostly stayed in the rivers and creeks of the Niger Delta once they reached coastline of what we now know as the Niger Delta.”

However, for the purpose of this study, the definition of the Niger Delta has been limited to the following states: Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Cross Rivers and Edo States with a population of over 45 million people distributed in over 1600 communities (NPC, 2006). The area has some unique characteristics, which tend to make development difficult. It is, for instance, one of the largest wetlands in the world. It covers an area of 70,000 square kilometres and is noted for its sandy coastal ridge barriers, brackish or saline mangroves, freshwater, permanent and seasonal swamp forests as well as lowland rainforest. The whole area is traversed and crisscrossed by a large number of rivers, rivulets, streams, canals and creeks. The coastal line is buffeted throughout the year by the tides of the Atlantic Ocean while the mainland is subjected to regimes of flood by the various rivers, particularly the river Niger. By this, the Niger Delta region is the second largest delta in the world and the largest wetland in Africa.

The people living in the region speak a range of languages and dialects. They are the Nembe-Akassa, Ijaw, Itsekiri, Urhobo, Isoko, Igbo, Beni, Ishan, Erowha Okpo, Ibibio, Ogoni, Etche, Ndoni, Ndokwa, Andoni, Ikwere Degema, Ogba, Ekpeye, Effik and Anang.

The researcher however recognizes the limitation in delimiting the area but is encouraged to do so because of the remarkable economic developments which occurred in the area (i.e. the South-South geo-political zone), also referred to as “core” Niger Delta in some quarters. In 2008, the period of the study, militancy, one way by which some youths in the region claimed was a means of asserting the rights of the people, reached its crescendo. It culminated in some manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt, for instance, leaving the country for other West African countries. Also, Nigeria's oil production level averaged 1.9 barrels per day as against her production capacity of 2.7 million barrels per day (<http://www.eja.deo.gov.cabs/Nigeria/Oil.html> retrieved on March 5, 2010).

The Niger Delta right before the country gained political independence from Britain on October 1, 1960, had been in the forefront of agitation for a better deal in the Nigerian Federation. Alamieyeseigha (2005) identifies six rebellions that occurred in this direction in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Niger Delta: the rebellion of King William of Nembe, 1894-95; Nana of Itsekiri 1896; and Oba Overanmi Nogbasi of Benin 1897; the 12-day revolution of Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro 1966; Ken Saro Wiwa of Ogoni 1993-1995 and the Ijaw Youth and Kaiama Declaration 1998-2000. According to him, the common thread running through the rebellions was injustice and demand of the people for legitimacy and survival. Ebiye (2000) cited in Alamieyeseigha (2005:2) identifies the causes of conflicts in the Niger Delta as follows: the merciless striving for power, conflicting reward systems and collective communal grievances, norms and traditions. Alamieyeseigha (2005:2) was to add poverty and environmental degradation to the list.

Despite being the richest geo-political region in the country in terms of natural resource endowment, unfulfilled, the Niger Delta has been threatened by

environmental devastation and worsening economic conditions. Incidental to and indeed compounding this ecological devastation is the perceived political marginalization, total oppression of the people and especially the denial of their rights, including land rights. In spite of the enormous wealth accruing from their land, the vast majority of the people continue to live in pristine conditions in the absence of electricity, pipe-borne water, hospital, decent housing and schools (Onduku, 2001:1).

The Niger Delta communities had protested the perceived injustices peacefully for decades and have been in the vanguard for tackling the “national question” problem. Notwithstanding, the Ogoni uprising from the early 1990s and the consequent execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa on November 10, 1995 by the General Abacha-led military government marked a new interesting interface of oil politics in Nigeria. Other events that led to the redefinition of the oil politics were the military invasion of Ijaw communities, consequent upon the Kaiama Declaration (see appendix i) was made, and the Odi military action of 1998 to 1999. The parties in the conflict did not involve only the Federal Government and the people of the Niger Delta but also the oil multinationals.

Onduku (2001:4) summarizes the grievances of the Niger Delta people as involving three closely interrelated, but analytically distinct issues: firstly, that all laws relating to oil exploration and land ownership be abrogated; secondly, the issue of natural resource control and self determination and thirdly, that appropriate institutional and financial arrangements should be put in place by the Nigerian nation state and the oil multinationals, to compensate the oil producing communities for the developmental and environmental problems associated with oil exploration and exploitation .



Having lived with the problems over the years, the youths of Ijaw, one of the ethnic nationalities in the region, demanded on December 11, 1998 in the Kaiama Declaration, the immediate withdrawal from the region, of all military forces of occupation, alleging repression by the Nigerian State among other things. Consequently, the declaration called on Ijaw youths in all Ijaw communities in the region, to implement the resolutions beginning from the 30th of December 1998, as a step towards reclaiming the control of their land.

Awoshakin (2001:1) observes that over the years, conflicts between the oil producing communities of the Niger Delta and oil companies on one hand, and among these communities and successive Nigerian governments on the other, have resulted in random violence, human rights violations, death and mass interment. Anyadike (1997) cited in Awoshakin (2001:1) reasons that in African conflict, the lines of confrontation are most often drawn over issue of exclusion, identity and the frustration of lack of basic needs under conditions of underdevelopment and the crumbling hold and legitimacy of an impoverished state. He goes on to point out that the conflicts in Africa arise as a result of global economic system that keeps Africa locked into a cycle of poverty and dominant aggravating local conflicts over power and wealth. This, he notes holds true for the Niger Delta crisis.

Awoshakin (2003:1) notes that the situation in the Niger Delta has continued to attract attention from the international media and of course the local ones. He laments that:

unfortunately, the kind of coverage given to the crisis in the Niger Delta has been such that focuses mainly on violence, particularly that act of violence perpetrated by angry members of the community. A lot of times, issues are covered in ways that bear little resemblance to the way people encounter them in everyday life.

### **1.1.1 The Emergence of Major Militia Groups in the Niger Delta**

Consequent upon the perceived marginalization, there erupted on February 23, 1966, the first violent opposition against the Nigerian government when Major Isaac Adaka Boro, an Ijaw hero, launched a guerrilla war, in an aborted secession attempt to create a Niger Delta Republic. Boro had a revolutionary militant group known as Niger Delta Volunteer Force. He was later executed in 1965 by the then military government.

In the last twenty years, various political movements have also emerged in opposition to the perceived injustice. Initially, these were usually non-violent. Such movements include those spearheaded by Mujahid Dokubo-Asari and Henry Oka who were at various times, tried for alleged treason and later pardoned. Asari and Oka founded the Niger Delta People's Volunteers Force (NDPVF) and Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) respectively. Instead of believing in nonviolent activism, they advocated violence as a resistance to the perceived enslavement of their people.

### **1.1.2 The Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF)**

Mujahid Dokubo-Asari founded the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force in 2003 and proclaimed himself the Niger Delta Ijaw leader. Asari named the NDPVF after Saro-Wiwa's Niger Delta Volunteer Force, in an effort to achieve through force, the demands issued in the Kaiama Declaration of 1998 (see appendix i).

The group's operations were funded through siphoning of oil and gas from pipelines in the Niger Delta, an act locally known as "bunkering." Asari justified energy theft on the grounds that the resources belonged to the people of the Niger Delta rather than

the Federal Government. The force drew its rank from disaffected youths, and brought under its umbrella, various youth confraternities also known as cult groups.

By September 2004, the NDPVF had announced an “all-out war” against the Nigerian State and issued an ultimatum to multinational energy companies to shut down their operations by October 1 the same year, otherwise, their employees would become targets in a major guerrilla war called “Operation Locust Feast.”

NDPVF’s attacks on oil installations, made government to recognize Asari’s influence in the Niger Delta and to invite him and his rival, Atake Tom, to reach an agreement on the cessation of hostilities. A deal was reached on October 1, 2004 which was supposed to lead to the disbanding of their respective militia groups and their total disarmament as well as keeping them within the democratic process. Although some aspects of the deal were implemented, it soon fell apart, leading to his arrest and imprisonment on September 20, 2005. Asari’s incarceration, made members of the group to operate under a new group called the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and others.

### **1.1.3 The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)**

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) claimed that the people had found themselves in a situation where the government and international oil companies owned all the oil under their feet. After its formation, MEND sought a union of all relevant militant groups in the Niger Delta. Until 2008 when Henry Oka was identified as the leader of MEND, the identity of the group had been somewhat obscure and faceless. Its causes appeared to have been completely taken up by unrelated groups inspired by it. Most often, different groups claimed responsibility

for some of the violence that erupted in the region. However, those who claimed to be the original members continued to allege that impostors were causing some of the violence that was occurring in Niger Delta.

NDPVF, MEND and other militant groups had perfected their tactics of operations in the creeks where they used speed boats and sophisticated weapons in destroying oil installations, attacking government security agencies in guerrilla warfare and abducting oil workers, especially the expatriates.

From the fore-going, it appears that the youths of the Niger Delta resorted to militancy since the not-so-violent approach earlier adopted by pioneer agitators such as Nana of Itsekiri did not achieve the desired result which is redressing the perceived government neglect.

The Nigerian media, naturally, have been reporting on these issues and events bothering on the Niger Delta. These issues and events rang from devastation of the ecology, militancy, communal clashes to oil theft and kidnapping. The reportage has naturally evolved into a discourse

Over the years, scholars in the field of Mass Communication have questioned the “reality” in the media reportage of events. The professional journalistic self-image on the question of impartiality has come under strong challenge from students of the media.

Fowler (1991:4) asserts that the “content” of newspapers is not fact about the world but in a very general sense ideas, beliefs, values, theories and propositions. Gieber (1964:143) states that “news is what newspapermen make it”. According to Cohen

and Young (1973:97) “news is manufactured by journalists”. The Glasgow University Media Group (1976) elaborated an alternative view of news practices, which is currently held among sociologists and students of the media. The model presents news as socially constructed, implying that events as reported are not a reflection of the intrinsic importance of those events but a product of a complex and artificial set of criteria for selection. Thus, the news that has been so selected is subjected to processes of transformation as it is encoded for publication. The technical properties of the medium - newspaper or television - for instance, and the ways in which they are used, are strongly effective in this transformation.

Both selection and transformation are guided by reference generally unconscious, to ideas and beliefs. Analysis of output can reveal abstract propositions which are not necessarily stated, and are usually questioned, and which dominate the structure of presentation.

Students of the media further claim that such propositions tend to be in consonance with the ideas of the controlling groups in industrial capitalist societies, because news is an industry with its own commercial self-interest. Thus, news is a practice, a discourse, which far from neutrally reflecting social reality and empirical facts, intervenes in what Berger and Luck Mann (1966) cited in Baran (2004:434) call “the social construction of reality.”

It is necessary to state that, here in Nigeria, the process of production of media content is guided by reference to these generally unconscious but usually questioned ideas, beliefs, abstract propositions or undertones such as ethnicity, regionalism and national question.

The Nigerian media, expectedly, have been reporting on the events of the moment in the country. One of such events is the Niger Delta question. The reportage of the Niger Delta has, naturally evolved into a discourse and has tickled one's interest as a research area. It is against this background therefore that this study is situated to investigate the Nigeria newspapers' portrayal or representation of the Niger Delta.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

There have been a number of studies in the area of language and communication on the Niger Delta. Awoshakin (2003:1) asserts that the kind of news reports on crises of the Niger Delta focus mainly on violence, particularly that act of violence perpetrated by the angry members of the communities. Sambe (2005:185) also notes that "full of vices are the manner, style and depth in which the media covered such crises as those of the Niger Delta, including the criminal destruction of Odi in Bayelsa state...." Bisina (2005), through a content analysis, investigated the influence of ownership on the newspaper coverage of the Niger Delta, finding out that newspapers owned by indigenes of the Niger Delta publish more positive stories about the region than those owned by non-indigenes of the region. Through a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Ijeomah (2012) examines the reporting of hostage taking in the Niger Delta, and the study reveals that framing of reports on conflict behaviour in the region is influenced by ethno-political factors, foreign policy implications and height of drama of the situation. Yusha'u (2010) in a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the headlines in the Nigerian press coverage of the quelling of the *Boko Haram* religious crisis in northern Nigeria and Federal Government's Joint Task Force (JTF) attack on Niger Delta militant camps in 2009, finds out that the Nigerian press has ethnic undertones in their reportage of the two events. Chilwa (2010) through a CDA examines the Nigerian press representation of the Niger Delta militia

groups and their activities. The study reveals that the negative representations of the ethnic militia are an ideological strategy used to shift attention from the real issues of ethnic marginalization and exploitation of the Niger Delta. In a similar study, Chiluya (2011) investigates the role of the media in manipulation of public opinion and people's perception of the roles of the Joint Military Task Force in the Niger Delta crisis. He finds out that the Nigerian press is sympathetic of the activities of the JMTF, in spite of obvious condemnable killings of the insurgents and attacks on civilians.

Findings of these studies have revealed that the region, which is grossly underdeveloped, is also negatively portrayed. They equally reveal that there are some ethno-political as well as ideological undertones behind the framing of the reports.

Though it could be said that the Niger Delta area has attracted the interest of researchers in Language and Communication to a very large extent, there appears to be paucity of studies on the audience's perception/interpretation of the print media output on the region. Investigation of this aspect of communication process has been considered imperative. This is so because audience is often involved in negotiation and re-negotiation of media messages (De Certeau, 1988; Hall 1999b); and such audiences are co-producers of meanings of media texts (Louw, 2001). This study, in addition to examining the manifest contents and the language of presentation of the print media output on the Niger Delta, also investigated the audience's role as co-producer of the meanings of these reports. This is the vacuum which the study sought to fill.

### 1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study analyzed Nigerian newspapers' coverage of the Niger Delta. Its overall purpose was to find out how much attention the Niger Delta received from the Nigeria newspapers, the dominant frames within which the newspaper reports on the region were constructed, and the audience role as co-producers of meanings of these media messages on the Niger Delta.

### 1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study had the following objectives:

- (a) To find out the extent of visibility of the Niger Delta in Nigerian newspapers.
- (b) To examine the kinds of reports on the Niger Delta available in Nigerian newspapers.
- (c) To assess the dominant image(s) of the Niger Delta portrayed by Nigerian newspapers.
- (d) To find out the "readings" which the audience give to the image(s).
- (e) To investigate whether there are ethnic and regional undertones in the Nigerian newspapers' portrayal of the Niger Delta.
- (f) To investigate possible ideological undertones lying behind the Nigerian newspapers' portrayal or representation of the Niger Delta.

### 1.5 Research Questions

To achieve the purpose stated in 1.4, the following research questions were posed to guide the study:

- 1. How visible is the Niger Delta region in the Nigerian newspapers?
- 2. What types of reports on the Niger Delta are available in the Nigerian newspapers?



3. What dominant images of the Niger Delta do these reports portray?
4. What 'readings' does the audience give to the reports?
5. To what extent are ethnic/regional undertones evident in Nigerian newspapers' reports on the Niger Delta?
6. What ideologies are behind Nigerian newspapers' construction of the Niger Delta?

### 1.6 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were also formulated to guide the study:

- 1 H0: Topics covered on the Niger Delta are independent of newspapers.  
H1: Topics covered on Niger Delta are not independent of newspapers.
- 2 H0: Positioning of published items on Niger Delta is independent of newspapers.  
H1: Positioning of published items on Niger Delta is not independent of newspapers.
- 3 H0: Directional focus of published items on Niger Delta is independent of newspapers.  
H1: Directional focus of published items on Niger Delta is not independent of newspapers.
- 4 H0: Length of published items on Niger Delta is independent of newspapers.  
H1: Length of published items on Niger Delta is not independent of newspapers.
- 5 H0: Sources of published items on Niger Delta are independent of newspapers.

H1: Sources of published items on Niger Delta are not independent of newspapers.

### 1.7 Significance of the Study

Obikezie (1990:4) observes that the goals of research are “discovering new facts; identifying relationships among variables so as to enhance the understanding of our environment; verifying and rejecting old theories about relationships and predicting future relationships and events. This study was an inquiry into the Nigerian newspapers’ coverage of the Niger Delta. It is considered significant because it:

1. Fills the existing gap which results from a dearth of inquiries into audience role as co-producers of meanings of media messages on the Niger Delta.
2. Adds to the understanding of the discourses on the Niger Delta.
3. Assists government and other stakeholders who rely on media messages and the audience perception/interpretation, for policy formulation and modification.
4. Provokes further research into how the media could be more effectively used to promote development and discourage conflicts in the region.
5. Adds to the existing literature on media studies on the Niger Delta.

### 1.8 Scope of the Study

This study investigated Nigerian newspapers’ coverage of the Niger Delta. Therefore, only the region’s coverage by the newspapers was analysed. Newspapers analysed were categorized into two: those based in the southern part of Nigeria and those published in northern part of the country. *The Guardian* and *Vanguard* represented newspapers based in the south while *Leadership* and *Daily Trust* represented those based in the north. The study was also limited to the consideration of headlines, straight news, opinions, features editorials and pictures.

Advertisement, cartons, letters to the editor and other contents were excluded from the study in order not to make it unwieldy.

As earlier mentioned the Niger Delta, for the purpose of the study, was delimited to the six South-South states of Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Cross River.

The study covered the period between January 2008 and December 2008. This period was chosen because of the remarkable economic developments which occurred in the Niger Delta during the period. Firstly, militancy which began in the region in the late 90s reached a very critical point in 2008 when the country's crude oil production averaged 1.9 million barrels per day, a far cry from her production capacity of 2.7 million barrels per day, resulting in huge losses in revenue. (Newswatch Magazine, December 29, 2009). Secondly, not less than 1000 lives were lost in the crisis while business collapsed in the region as thousands of people became jobless. The deployment of the Joint Military Task Force (JTF) to restore order and create conducive atmosphere for business in the region could not tame the militants, resulting in. some expatriate oil workers fleeing the region and some manufacturing companies leaving the country for other West African countries such as Ghana. (Newswatch Magazine Dec 29, 2009).

Both the daily and weekend editions of the newspapers were considered since events in the region made interesting news items and editorials, no matter their days of occurrence.

### **1.9 Definition of Terms**

The following are the operational definitions of some basic concepts in this study:

**Ethnicity:** Ethnic bias embedded in newspaper reports on events, issues and

personalities in the Niger Delta.

**Regionalism:** North-South dichotomy/leanings portrayed in Nigeria print media reports.

**Militancy:** The taking up of arms by some groups of youths of the Niger Delta to protest perceived marginalization of the region by the Nigerian government.

**Militant Groups:** The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and other faceless armed gangs operating in the Niger Delta.

**Coverage:** Newspaper reports on events, issues or personalities.

**Portrayal:** The act of describing or presenting somebody or something in a particular way, especially when this does not give complete or accurate impression of what they are like.

**Image:** A mental picture of somebody or something

**Content:** Editorial items in a newspaper such as news stories, features and editorial.

**Stereotype:** A fixed idea or image that many people have of the Niger Delta which may often not be true in reality.

**Myth:** Something that many people believe of the Niger Delta region but that does not exist or is false.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter treats a review of the related literature as well as the theoretical framework guiding the study. The chapter is organized under five sub-headings: The Niger Delta in the Eyes of the Media; Ethnicity, Regionalism and the Nigerian Media; Language in the Media; Theoretical Framework and Summary of Literature Review.

#### **2.2 The Niger Delta in the Eyes of the Media**

The Niger Delta has certain peculiar characteristics. First, a major part of the area remains underdeveloped. It lacks good road network, electricity, pipe borne water, good healthcare facilities, and limited access to education among other social infrastructures. Underscoring this fact, NDDC (2000:1) states “the Niger Delta remains the least developed area of the country in physical, socio-economic terms”. Since conditions of rural communities apply and obtain in most part of the Niger Delta, media coverage of the area has largely been viewed broadly under media coverage of rural areas in Nigeria.

There is consensus in the body of literatures that the rural areas in Nigeria, including the large part of the Niger Delta, do not get media attention or at best are under reported. Adesina (2000:9) submits that Nigerian news media are typically concentrated in the urban centres where they cover legitimate institutions and cultivate powerful or influential officials as news sources. He explains that “journalists do fail to regard local news as being as important as national or international news and, as a result, downplay local news”. According to him, the most frequent actors in the news are inevitable individuals who play a role in national activities. He laments:

This is the average newspaper's attitude. Yet we are all supposed to be Nigerians, equal before man and God... news journalists often forget that the little man in Odi (in Bayelsa State)... has a replica in Gembu or Biliri, hence if you ignore it you are ignoring most of Nigeria.

This position goes further to capture the Niger Delta dilemma in the Nigerian media. Moemeke (1981:14) also shares this view and notes that many broadcast programmes, do not take the peculiar characteristics of people in the rural areas, thereby making them "merely listeners." He adduces three reasons for this development, two of which are relevant here:

First, the base of broadcasting is too far away from the majority of those listeners to offer sufficient motivation to be actively involved in the programmes... the second reason why the majority of listeners to the programmes remain passive is the separation of the providing personnel from the receiving end.

Moemeke (1981:34) stresses that "the impact of radio diminishes as one gets away farther from the cities into the rural areas, while the rural dwellers exist mainly as ear-dropping audience".

Writing later, Pate (2005:35) agrees with this position, noting that the coverage of issues and actions pertaining to the rural areas has been found to be low in most of the broadcast stations. He suggests that newspapers and magazines have little or no space for rural news. Pate shares Moemeke's reasons for this development. According to him three factors are responsible. These are that all radio and television stations are urban based, commercialization of broadcasting service and centralization of broadcasting outlets.

Boafo (1987) and Opubor (1985) cited in Udoakah (2004:129) all submit that rural news are underplayed in the Nigerian media. According to Boafo, the press and broadcast media give more space and airtime to events concerning the political

leadership and social–economic news than information about events in the rural communities. Anyanwu (1992:58) argues that the development is not necessarily because of want to report in the rural areas but that:

Journalists find it difficult, if not impossible, to penetrate most of these communities because of lack of motorable roads. Thus, accurate accounts of these vital developmental activities elude Nigerian journalists hence the print media tend to be predominantly urban-based.

Adesina (2000:8) states that this urban-centric focus of news is not peculiar to Nigeria. J. K. Galbraith, cited in Adesina, points out that the phenomenon also obtains in the United States. According to him, “nearly all of our political comments originate in Washington... the media thrive on news and somehow these news, originate only from Washington the seat of power”.

There are also empirical evidences on the urban nature of news in Nigeria. Dare (1973), cited in Adesina (2000:9) also states that “news reporting in Nigeria is urban-centred, making people in the rural areas almost invisible and idle”. He examined 305 stories transmitted by the New Agency of Nigeria (NAN) and discovered that only seven of them, were about events in the rural areas while the rest were about events occurring in Lagos, the nation’s capital then, and in the other state capitals. The agency however, now maintains a district office in some states of the federation, in addition to the state offices, yet there is still disparity in the agency’s coverage of the urban and rural areas. The volume of reportage is highly skewed in favour of the urban centres. Udoakah (2004:33) also did a content analysis of 391 programme items of the Akwa Ibom Broadcasting Corporation and Radio II for the first quarter of 1997. He observes that there is great disparity in the coverage of urban and rural areas by the two stations. According to him “while the urban centres received greater attention from the two stations, the rural areas were abysmally

underreported”. He attributes this to shortage of reporting staff, lack of accessible roads, telephone and other communication facilities to service the rural areas.

Dare, cited earlier in Adesina (2000:9), adds that correspondents are deployed in state capitals only. Thus other urban centres as well as rural areas do not attract coverage unless a government functionary carries out some official engagements there. Adesina (2000:9) asserts that those areas most often get media attention when they witness communal conflicts and other vices. Nehu (1993:127) affirms this position. He notes that:

Nigerian journalists define news in such a way that rural dwellers would come into news only when they are involved in communal clashes, or are protesting the confiscation of their farm lands by government without adequate compensation.

This depicts the Niger Delta experience in the Nigerian media. News about the area most often gets prominence when the host communities are at war with oil companies over compensation arising from oil spillage, or when militants take expatriates hostage on account of failure by the multinational oil companies to honour Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) entered into with the communities or when militants clash with security operatives. Awoshakin (2003:1) also observes:

the kind of coverage given to the crisis in the Niger Delta has been such that focuses mainly on the reporting of violence, particularly that act of violence perpetrated by angry members of the communities. A lot of times, issues are covered in ways that bear little resemblance to the way people encounter them in every day life.

Sambe (2005:185) also reasons along with Awoshakin. He notes: “full of vices are the manner, style and depth in which the media covered such crises as those of the Niger Delta, including the criminal destruction of Odi in Bayelsa State....” Bsina (2005) examines the influence of ownership in the newspaper coverage of the Niger Delta. His findings show that Nigerian newspapers give prominence to negative



straight news about the Niger Delta. He states however that newspapers owned by people from the Niger Delta publish more positive stories than those owned by non-indigenes of the region, an indication that there are other considerations apart from professional ones in the coverage of the Niger Delta by the newspapers. Also, Obijiofor (2008) observes that the Nigerian press prioritizes the negative while reporting on the Niger Delta. Obijiofor cited in Ijeoma (2012:24) states:

If there are no explosions, no shootings and killings in the Niger Delta crisis, the region would most certainly disappear from the radar of journalism. But the moment a school child is kidnapped in Port Harcourt or Warri or Yenogua, the media would encircle that city and cover the event until it loses currency or until another event breaks out in the region or elsewhere.

Ijeomah (2012) examines the reporting of hostage taking in the Niger Delta, and the study reveals that framing of reports on conflict behaviour in the region is influenced by ethno-political factors, foreign policy implications and height of drama of the situation. She notes that while the newspapers based in the southern part of the country adopt “support framing” in their reports promoting marginalization rhetorics of the region, those based in the northern part apply “distance framing” and portray the actions of the militia groups as lawless and a threat to the corporate existence of Nigeria.

In his discourse on the emergence of the Boko Haram religious sect in Nigeria, Popoola (2012:43) finds out that the terroristic stance of the sect has posed some danger to press freedom in Nigeria. According to him, “the killing of journalists by the sect, has, however, intimidated the Nigerian journalists who now thread cautiously to avoid being eliminated by the sect”.

Yusha'u's (2010) study on headlines in the Nigerian press coverage of the quelling of the *Boko Haram* religious crisis in northern Nigeria and Federal Government's Joint Task Force (JTF) attack on Niger Delta militant camps in 2009, asserts that the press has ethnic undertones in its reportage of the two events. Chilwa (2010) examines the Nigeria press representation of the Niger Delta militia groups and their activities. The study reveals that the negative representations of the ethnic militia are an ideological strategy used to shift attention from the real issues of ethnic marginalization and exploitation of the Niger Delta. The ideological nature of the labels of the ethnic militia is that they express value judgments, especially of the government and of attitudes towards the Niger Delta situation that the public is (often indirectly) expected to exhibit. He asserts that the ideological strategy mainly employed by the Nigerian government and the media consists of constructing the oppressed as the oppressors. Chilwa (2010:70) further observes

In our case, this is done by applying strongly denotative and connotative labels to the militia groups, thereby sorting them into certain rigid social categories that determine how the oppressor members of society understand and judge the oppressed members' actions.

In a similar study, Chilwa (2011) investigates the media manipulation of public opinion and people's perception of the roles of the Joint Military Task Force in the Niger Delta crisis. He finds out that the Nigerian press is sympathetic with the activities of the JMTF in spite of obvious condemnable killings of the insurgents and attacks on civilians. He notes that by constantly reporting the insurgency as mere activities of some hapless kidnappers and abductors, the brutal actions of the JMTF was justified and viewed as imperative and necessary.

Isola & Akintayo (2012) examine the pattern of media representation of armed and terrorist groups in Nigeria and notes that the geo-political divides and ethno-religious structure of the country have large influence on media representation of terrorist groups. The study reveals also that the media have been instrumental to the popularization of armed insurgent groups in Nigeria. Ishola & Akintayo (2012:2) states:

The armed groups rely heavily on the media to report their violent activities and often bask in the attention brought on them in national security discourse which are sustained by the reporting and analysis of their activities by the media. Some of the groups have established channels with the media to announce their violent operations before and after they strike or to pass on threats to targets of terrorism through the same channels.

The study asserts that the media take delight in covering the aftermath of such operations and the reportage has resulted in some level of audience fixation to the media, as the only platform for obtaining information about the activities of the armed groups.

### **2.3 Ethnicity, Regionalism and the Nigerian Media**

It is common for individuals and groups in different societies to have a way of defining themselves through the creation of identities that make them different from other members of the society. Parekh (2008:9) categorizes such identities into three different groups - personal identity, social identity and overall identity. According to him, the personal identity refers to those attributes with which an individual distinguishes himself/herself from others, including his/her biological features and his/her sense of self consciousness. The social identity refers to those attributes with which members of a group define themselves in terms of belonging to a religious, ethnic or cultural group. The overall identity refers to a combination of the attributes of other identities used as a means of self differentiation.

Over the years, the Nigerian people have remained conscious of an attribute of their social identity - ethnicity. Yusha'u (2010:7) asserts that ethnicity has further been promoted by the colonial and post colonial arrangements of the country. According to him, "access to state resources and even individual achievements are related to one's social group, ethnic and regional affiliations".

Nnoli (1978) cited in Ukiwo (2005:8-9) describes ethnicity as a social phenomenon associated with interactions among members of different ethnic groups. Ethnic groups from his perspective are social formations distinguished by the communal nature of their boundaries and such groups may be distinct in terms of language, culture or both. He asserts that such a group feels ethnocentric, that is, it sees other groups as inferior or more or less rivals. This feeling brings about certain attitude which distorts reality and breeds subjectivity in the evaluation and perception of events. He goes further to point out that ethnicity often contains an obscure class component. In this case, it becomes a tool for the elite members of the society to hold on to their privileges.

Osaghae (1995:11) defines ethnicity as the employment of the mobilization of ethnic identity and difference to gain advantage in situations of competition, conflict or cooperation. Commenting on this definition, Ukiwo (2005:9) identifies two issues which he says are central to the discussions on ethnicity. According to him, the first issue highlighted in the definition is that ethnicity is neither natural nor accidental but is the product of a conscious effort by social actors. The second is that ethnicity is not manifest only in conflictive or competitive relations but also in the context of cooperation.

Yusha'u (2010:7) notes that formation of political parties from independence till date, appointments into the federal civil service and distribution of resources reflect ethnicity. Between 1999 when the country returned to democracy after 33 years of military rule, the elite, especially in the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) for instance, has maintained a zoning arrangement for the presidency between the North and the South. Under this North-South regional arrangement, a candidate chosen by a particular divide to represent the party in a general election carries the party's flag no matter the level of deficiency of such a candidate.

Osaghae and Suberu (2005) quoted in Yusha'u (2010:7) summarize ethnic identities in Nigeria into two broad categories of majority and minority groups. According to them, the origin of this categorization stemmed more from the power configurations of the former colonial regions in which the large groups, Hausa-Fulani in the North, Igbo in the South-East and Yoruba in the South-West, held sway. They note that prior to the creation of these regions, there were no major or minor groups in the country. Nnoli (1978) cited in Kalu (2004:15) states: "ethnicity is the fundamental basis for identity and political cleavages in Nigeria".

Ake (1993) cited Yusha'u (2010: 8) expresses little wonder why prior to Nigeria's independence in 1960, the leading political figures of the time, Alhaji Amadu Bello, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe and Chief Obafemi Awolowo, preferred regional politics in order to become the premiers of their respective regions. The elite therefore used ethnicity as a tool for the maintenance of their class and the privileges associated with the acquisition of government office. Anugwom (2000:67) asserts that the main political parties in the First Republic, the National Council for Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) and Action Group (AG) were all formed in line with ethnic and regional affiliations.

The situation remained the same even in the Second Republic. The leading political parties then, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), Nigeria People's Party (NPP), and Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP), all had their main support in the regions of origin of their political leaders. The possible exception in this trend was the case of the NPN which won elections in other parts of the country. Even then, NPN was more of an offshoot of NPC, the dominant party in the north during the First Republic.

The two political parties that existed during the Third Republic - National Republican Convention (NRC) and Social Democratic Party (SDP) - were created by the then military government. The prevailing situation forced all the politicians to be crammed into the two political parties. However, the Third Republic was aborted following the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election.

Describing the scenario in the Nigerian politics, Diamond (1983:458) states:

No nation has come more graphically to symbolize the political explosiveness and human tragedy of competitive ethnic mobilization than Nigeria in its first decade of independence... the demographic distribution of ethnic groups into a "centralized" structure meant that competition tended to centre around the three major groups, the Hausa-Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba, which together comprise some two-thirds of the population.

It is essential to note that some of the key political players in the First Republic such as Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe and Chief Obafemi Awolowo were newspaper publishers. This according to Agbaje (1993:459) "meant that the press had become inextricably linked with the emerging pattern of political rivalries often couched in geo-ethnic terms". Describing the trend, Jibo and Okoosi-Simbine (2003:183) state:

when a national issue enters the public domain for debate, the Nigerian media often, though not all the time, take the North-versus-South position on it... the North-South divide in the Nigerian politics is so deep that public policy refers to it, and mass media outfits skew their reports and analyses to accommodate the interests of their adherents.

Examples abound where the Nigerian media took ethno-regional stands. One good example is in 1953 during the debate over Nigeria's independence. The northern part of the country objected to the country's independence on the basis that it did not have enough manpower and skills to compete with the more educationally advantaged southern Nigeria. Another issue that further reveals the ethno-regional role of the Nigerian press is the debate before independence, on the position of Lagos as the capital of Nigeria. Two leading newspapers then - *The West African Pilot* published by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe and *Daily Service* supporting Ernest Ikoli and Chief Obafemi Awolowo - had different views on the matter and engaged each other in the debate. *The Pilot* served as the mouthpiece of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroun (NCNC), Dr Azikiwe's party while *Daily Service* was the mouthpiece of the Action Group (AG), formed by Chief Awolowo. *The West African Pilot* wrote editorials and news stories demanding that every part of Nigeria should have a share in the capital while *Daily Service* through its own reports and editorials, wanted Lagos to be part of the Western Region. According to *Daily Service*, "to submit to the severance of Lagos from the West would amount to economic and fiscal suicide on the part of the people and government of the Western Region".

The paper therefore criticized the then colonial secretary, Mr Lyttleton for favouring the idea of making Lagos an independent entity. Adebani (2004:82) noted that *Daily Service* further argued that Lagos was an indisputable Yoruba city owned by the West, and should remain a lone star. It further accused Mr Lyttleton that in arriving at his decision, he disregarded all the historical facts and constitutional precedents.

*The West African Pilot* disagreed with the *Daily Service*. According to Adebani, the paper stated in its September 10, 1953 editorial that:

Lagos has a special position in the mind of every Nigerian, because the Binis consider it as part of their ancient empire and people from the Northern Region consider Lagos as a place developed using their resources, particularly groundnut and cotton, commodities that were booming then in the international market. For the people from the Eastern Region, Lagos was not built only with their revenue but with their blood, while the attachment of the Yoruba to Lagos stems from historical and geographical ties, and therefore Lagos is considered a home for the entire sections of the country.

During the military government of General Yakubu Gowon, a scandal known as “Dabo-Tarka affair” broke out. The press, especially *Daily Times* based in the South, and *New Nigerian* published in the North took regional stands. Olukoju (2004) and Jibo & Okoosi-Simbine (2003) cited in Yusha’u (2010:9) assert that at the beginning of the Forth Republic in 1999, the then Speaker of the House of Representative, Alhaji Ibrahim Salisu Buhari was accused of falsifying his age records and claiming to have attended University of Toronto in Canada. Investigations by *The News*, a southern magazine, confirmed that he neither attended University of Toronto nor was he honest about his age records. The entire southern press followed the issue aggressively, forcing Salusi to resign. Another scandal followed the Toronto University saga, involving Chief Bola Tinubu, the then governor of Lagos State who was accused of falsely claiming to have attended University of Chicago in the United States. Investigations by *Today* newspaper revealed that he did not attend the institution, yet the Nigerian print media, predominantly located in the South remained silent and Tinubu continued to serve for two terms.

Comments by two prominent Nigerians on the two incidents help to buttress Olukoju and Jibo & Okoosi-Simbine’s assertion. Waziri Adio, an editor in *ThisDay* newspaper then, cited in Olukoju (2004:83) had this to say:

Buhari (the former Speaker) is from the North. That section of the country has always claimed that the press has a sectional agenda. It is now turning out that the region of origin decided Buhari’s fate. Tinubu, however, comes from



the haven of the “Ngbati press”. Some of us have fooled ourselves that this is a fair independent press. Now we know better. Apart from justifying the paranoia of a section of the country, the South-West press has cast to the wind whatever moral stature it gained on the Buhari saga. Unfortunately, The News magazine which exposed Buhari as a crook that he is, was in the lead of this reversal.

The second remark came from Senator Bala Adamu, the then Chairman of the Senate Committee on Special Duties. Adamu’s comment in Olukoju (2004:84) runs thus:

It is very clear from what has happened in the past few months, beginning from the Bola Tinubu saga to the current attempts from the outside to unseat the Senate President that the media, except for a few ones, has clearly shown that it is biased, sectional and tribalistic and it has been disappointing. Had Senator Okadigbo been a Yoruba man, the bashing, negative publicity and campaign of calumny that had been mounted assiduously against him, would not have taken place.

Senator Adamu was referring to the impeachment of the then Senate President, Dr Chuba Okadigbo, who was removed from his position partly due to the negative campaign of the press. His case reveals one of the complexities of the Nigerian press when it comes to ethno-regional issues. Dr Okadigbo an Igbo, was from the South-East, unlike Tinubu who is a Yoruba from the South-West, the region with the highest concentration of the media. So, the then Senate President could not enjoy the shield of the Nigerian press.

Yusha’u (2009:115) calls these regional, ethnic, sectional and religious considerations in the practice of journalism in the country “regional parallelism”. According to him, “regional parallelism’ is rooted in the historical, political and economic realities of a given country and Nigerian newspapers exhibited signs of ethnicity and “regional parallelism” in framing the stories on the conflicts. Yusha’u (2010:18) puts it this way “the representation of the stories has confirmed the

categorization of Nigerian newspapers by Nigerians under 'Lagos-Ibadan' axis and 'Kaduna-Abuja' axis".

Summarizing the scenario, Oyoivbaire (2001:32) succinctly depicts the character of the Nigerian press:

The South-West of the country is the materialist location of the Nigerian media which coincides with the Yoruba nationality, early evangelization of Christianity, propagation of western education and establishment of the seat of colonial and post-colonial governments together with the large and flourishing market forces and patronage which aided the locational stimuli of the media. The readership audience for marketing its role, mandate and products was the South-West and this historical location continued to provide the arrowhead for opinion formation, legitimization of media contents, agitation and agenda setting.

## **2.4 Language in the Media**

Repeatedly, media case studies have documented the creation, manufacture, invention or mediation of a reality portrayed in the news. Altheide (1976), Epstein (1974), Fishman, (1980), Nimmo & Combs (1985) and Tuchman, (1978) all elaborated on how the media create "reality". Shoemaker's (1987, 1996) synthetic explanation of the production of news content captures the central theme of the findings of other studies on news, which is that: news is a human construction that gains its characteristics through the social world from which it emerges.

Advancing further the argument, Fowler (1991:4), states that news is a representation of the world in languages. He asserts that because language is a semiotic code, it imposes a structure of values - which are social and economic in origin – on whatever it represents. So inevitable, news, like every discourse, constructively patterns that which it speaks. He further adds that the "standard position" of current students of the media is that news is a construct which is to be understood in social and semiotic terms, and everyone acknowledges the

importance of language in this process of construction. For this reason, he states categorically that the “content of newspapers is not facts about the world, but in a very general sense, ideology and in the construction of ideas in the press, language is not neutral, but a highly constructed mediator”. Olowe (1993) cited in Taiwo (2005:223) identifies the various linguistic devices used by newspapers such as thematization, passivization and nominalization, in projecting their ideological view points. He states:

The editor and his reporters on the one hand and their audience constitute an ideological empire. The newspaper subjects all newsworthy events that constantly come up in social life to rigorous linguistic manipulations to make them suit the ideological expectation of the audience.

Taiwo (2005:244) notes that beyond the generally observed rhetorical and graphological devices employed in newspaper headlines, there are also hidden ideological meanings behind those written words.

Chiluwa (2010:41) states that the choice of one word over other available (sets of) options is always significant, especially because of the power of words to shape perceptions. According to Hodge and Kress (1993) cited in Chiluwa (2010:41), choices made in specific contexts may help us understand how social forces influence the text. Fairclough (1995) cited in Chiluwa (2010:42) argues that formal choices constitute choices of meaning, which reveal how media language for example, works ideologically.

The ideological work of the media language affects the way individuals’ or groups’ identities and relations are represented. Particular construction of social identities would particularly define how their actions are to be judged or evaluated. The usual direct way of expressing ideology in discourse is the recognition that ideologies organise specific group attitudes; these attitudes are used in forming personal

opinions about individuals or groups, their identities and relations, and such personal opinions may be finally expressed in texts or discourse (van Dijk, 2005:24). Ideologies are not limited to the representation and legitimisation of class domination; dominated groups also require a form of ideology as a basis for resistance (van Dijk, 2005:24). The main social function of ideologies therefore is “the coordination of the social practices of group members for effective realisation of the goals of a social group and the protection of their interest” (Van Dijk, 2005:24). Very often, “many group ideologies involve the representation of 'self' and 'others', 'us' and 'them', leading to idealised polarisations – We are good and They are Bad – especially when conflicting interests are involved” (van Dijk, 2005:25).

Representation or meaning associated with certain people can link them with particular patterns of behaviour and attitudes e.g. violence, robbery, prostitution, militancy and so on. For example Baker and McEnery (2005) and Baker (2006) show that refugees and asylum seekers in UK papers are generally constructed as a natural disaster, problematic, nuisances and criminals. It is quite easy therefore to discern racism, intolerance and prejudice in discourse whether of the press, politics or religion. Hence, lexical items are often generally selected to reflect these opinions or express value judgments; e.g. 'militant', 'terrorist', 'miscreant' vs. 'freedom fighter' (Chiluwa, 2011:199). Journalists are able to influence their readers by producing their own discourses or helping to reshape existing ones. Such discourses or points of view are often shaped by citing the opinions of those in power. However, each newspaper/magazine generally has a political stance, which, over time, it may alter on various subjects (Baker, 2006). Language users or journalists do not just make linguistics choices based on the merits of individual words, but rather on relatively stable combinations of words hence, Matheson (2005:22) argues that lexical

analysis is 'strongest when it finds something more than choices between words but consistent patterns which suggest preoccupations within the particular discursive context, and which therefore add up to a representation of the world for a culture or for a group which holds status within a culture.

Galtung & Ruge (1973) formulated a list of critical factors widely accepted in the analysis of the concept of news values referred to as F1 – F2 (frequency, cultural proximity, relevance, meaningfulness, consonance etc). Fowler (1991:17) argues that underlying Galtung & Ruge's (1973) news values concept are the basic elements of stereotypes. According to him, a stereotype is a socially-constructed mental pigeon-hole into which events and individuals can be sorted, thereby making such events and individuals comprehensible. He states:

Values are to be regarded as inter-subjective mental categories. In determining the significance of events, newspapers and their readers make reference explicit or more usually implicit to what are variously called in cognitive psychology and in semantics as "frames," "paradigms" "stereotypes" and "general proposition.

According to him, the principle, in loose terms, means that people work with tacit mental categories for the sorting of experience.

Following Fowler's argument, it becomes clear that the formation of news events and news values is, in fact, a reciprocal dialectical process in which stereotypes are the currency of negotiation. The occurrence of a striking event reinforces stereotype, and reciprocally, the firmer the stereotype the more likely are relevant events to become news. Omenuga (2004:169) asserts that the dominant image of the Nigerian woman portrayed in the news is based on stereotypes. Lule (1995:382-386) demonstrates that press portrayal of Mike Tyson as the animal savage and helpless victim during his 1991 trial actually drew from and added to the powerful

symbolic types through which the press portrayed people of colour (African American).

Just as stereotypes are used in news reports so also are myths. Drummond (1984) defines myth as primarily a metaphorical device for telling people about themselves, about other people and about the complex world of natural and mechanical objects which they inherit. Frye (1957) says that myth reassures by telling tales that explain baffling or frightening phenomena and provides acceptable answer. Myth does not necessarily reflect an objective reality but builds a world of its own.

## **2.5 Theoretical Framework**

### **The Constructionist Theory**

This study is situated within the constructionist theory of representational communications, in view of its nature and focus. Alvarado & Robin (1987) cited in Okoro (2010:35) notes that the constructionist theory as an exploratory/analytical tool of inquiry has its root in studies on representations, although as a theory, it was articulated by Tuchman in 1978. Tuchman (1978:3) states that news is not a report on a factual world, but a depletable consumer product that must be made fresh daily. In other words, media content is a reality constructed or reconstructed, not reflected. This implies that news is not a gathering of facts that already exist but that facts are defined organizationally - facts are "pertinent" information gathered by professionally validated method, specifying the relationship between what is known and how it is known. Constructionism implies that reality in any given media text is created or constructed with the use of codes chosen to convey a particular meaning of information. According to Okoro (2010:35) constructionist theory looks at media products as social constructs which draw their strengths from the representative capacity of the media.

The constructionist theory became prominent in scholarly discourses, following publication of the book, *The Social Construction of Reality* by two sociologists, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann in 1966. Since then it has been widely applied in socio-cultural studies. Berger and Luckmann's thesis explains how cultures use signs and symbols to construct and maintain a uniform reality. They argue that people who share a culture also share "an on-going correspondence" of meaning. In other words, things generally mean the same to all individuals in a particular culture. A stop sign or a danger sign, for instance, has just about the same meaning for everyone. Berger and Luckmann call all these things that have "objective" meaning "symbols," implying that people routinely interpret things in the usual way. But there are other things in the environment to which we assign "subjective" meaning. The sociologists call these things signs.

As a theory, *constructionism* has been distinguished from *constructivism*. While social constructionism has to do with the analysis of phenomena which are related to social contexts, social constructivism is concerned with an individual's meaning-making of knowledge in a social context (Okoro 2010:42). According to him, the constructionist theory has had a remarkable impact on not just 'the emergence of *sociology of science*' but also "the growing field of science and technology studies.

Social constructionism cannot be separated from the concept of representation and to fully understand the former, it is pertinent to have an insight into the latter. Representation refers to the construction in any medium (especially the mass media) of aspects of reality such as people, places, objects, events, cultural identities and other abstract concepts. Such representations may be in speech or writing as well as still or moving pictures. According to Hall (1997:336), representation is simply the

way or process in which phenomena are constructed. Omenugha (2005:107) states “representation (in simple terms) could mean using language to say something meaningful about the world to the other people, describing something to make it resonate with others or perhaps simply to symbolise”. Galadima (2001) cited in Omenugh (2005:107) observes that representation refers to the way and manner in which different groups are presented in the media.

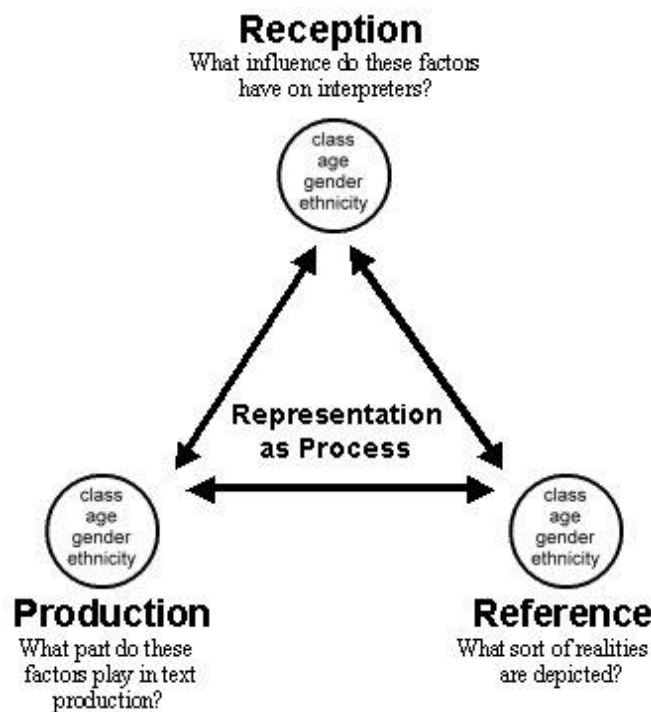
Representation imposes an imagery unity or coherence on the elements being represented. Hall (1997:337) states that this involves the reconstitution of “individual person-subjects into the various ideological totalities - the “community”, the “nation”, “public opinion”, the “consensus”, the “general interest”, the “popular will”, “society” and “consumers” . Such representations seek to win and secure legitimacy for what is being represented. According to Mitchell (1994) cited in Okoro (2010:40) representation (in memory, in verbal descriptions, in images) not only mediates our knowledge (of slavery and many other things), but obstructs fragments and negates that knowledge. He further stresses the need to shift from the perspective of viewing representation as merely objects representing, towards focusing on the relationships and processes through which representations are produced, valued, viewed and exchanged. Representation connotes the process and products involved in the construction of reality.

In the production process of reality, representation also involves reception and interpretation of the reality by people whose identities are also differentially marked in relation to given demographic factors such as age, gender, class and ethnicity (Alvarado & Robin, 1987). The audience is often involved in negotiation and re-negotiation of media messages (De Certeau, 1988; Hall 1999b). Louw (2001) cited



in Omenugha (2011:31) notes that part of the reason is that the audiences are co-producers of meanings. Often when audiences construct meanings from media messages, they are said to be involved in the act of “reading”. But Kitzinger (1999) cited in Omenugha (2011:32) advises that this term needs to be unpacked. She suggests that we should look beyond the commonly conceived notion of reading as interpretation to include reactions. According to her, audience may frequently share a common interpretation of media message while differing in their reactions. Most times, people do not “read” a report differently, some simply refuse to believe the fact conveyed, or blatantly disagree with the media interpretation.

The following diagram clearly illustrates Alvarado’s view on reception and interpretation of reality by people:



**Source:** Home Admin Lectures retrieved from the internet on June 5, 2008.

Generally, representations like class, ethnicity, racism, bias, stereotype and even pride and prejudice are “sold” to the target audience with little or no suspicion and this brings to the fore, the issue of reality and constructionism. In the controversy over reality and constructionism, the constructionists are of the view that objectivism fizzles out as a result of systems of representations which dress up issues and ideologies in a “modified” structure/meaning that does not necessarily mirror the real world. According to Alvarado & Robin (1987), Diawara (1988), Dyer (1993) and Hall (2000), constructionism has been found to overtake reality. Their findings have given rise to the following assertions about representation:

- Reality is always represented – what we treat as direct experience is “mediated” by perceptual codes. Representation always involves “the construction of reality”.
- All texts, however realistic they may seem to be, are constructed representations rather than simply transparent ‘reflections’, recordings, transcriptions or reproductions of pre-existing realities.
- Representations which become familiar through constant re-use come to feel ‘natural’ and unmediated.
- Representations require interpretation; we make modality judgments about them.
- Representation is unavoidably selective, foregrounding some things and backgrounding others.
- Realists focus on the “correspondence” of representations to “objective” reality (in terms of “truth, ‘accuracy’ and ‘distortions’”), whereas constructionists focus on whose realities are being represented and whose are being denied.

- Both structuralists and poststructuralist theories lead to ‘reality’ and ‘truth’ being regarded as the products of particular systems of representations - every representation is motivated and historically contingent.

The assertions bring to the fore, the adequacy of representativeness of what or who is being represented, and adequacy of representativeness becomes critical in media representation.

## 2.6 Media Representation

In her study, Dyer (1993) identifies three major characteristics of media representation:

- Representation is selective: individuals in the media are often used to replace a group of people. One member of this group then represents the whole social group.
- Representation is culture-specific: representations are presentations. The use of codes and conventions available in the culture shapes and restricts “what can be said... about any aspect of reality in a given place, in a given society at a given time.”
- Representation is subject to interpretations: although visual codes are restricted by cultural conventions, they “do not have single determinate meanings. To a certain degree, their meaning is a matter of interpretation.”

Okoro (2010:40) posits that representation, unlike real life, adheres to the rule of the market which is controlled by a particular group of people. Croteau and Hoynes (2001) cited in Okoro (2010:41) remark that in order to “sell”, representation must adapt to the market amorality principle of marketizing what is acceptable,

irrespective of its political correctness. In other words, representation draws from the prevailing socio-cultural ideologies of a particular group of people. Representation is closely related to ideological framing, a constructionist technique used in merchandizing media products and “positioning” the products as “the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.” In the same vein, “news” is seen as the “news of the day” while “all the news” becomes all that is available despite the fact that there are millions of events out there that could make the news. The falsity of regarding the news as the ‘truth’ has become the accepted “professional format” of presenting news which in itself of course, is a “constructed reality”.

Chiluwa (2011:197) states that representation in the media, presupposes that media texts constitute points of views and value judgments about social events, situations and relationships. Hence, representation comprises versions of social reality that mirror the position and purpose of the people that produce them; this is usually reflected in the choices that are made about what is foregrounded or left in the background, included or excluded, made explicit or left implicit in the text (Fairclough, 1995a, Van Dijk, 1991). According to Fairclough, analysis of representation would account for structures of propositions and how these reflect ideology and relations of power. The writer’s choice of one word over other available sets of options is always significant especially because of its power to shape perceptions. According to Hodge and Kress (1993) quoted in Chiluwa (2011:197) choices made in specific contexts could be a good guide to how social forces can influence.

The dominant qualities of “appearance” and “presence” of the constructionist theory make its relationship with representation quite inseparable. The inseparability of the

two becomes clearer when we consider Baldonado's (1996:2) examination of the ideological significance of representation, especially in the context of power inequalities and the subordination of the subaltern (lowly ranked). He elaborates further on the various forms of representation thus:

Representations... come in various forms; films, television, photographs, paintings, advertisements and other forms of popular culture. Written materials... academic texts, novels and other literature, journalistic pieces... are also important forms of representation. These representations, to different degrees, are thought to be somewhat realistic, or to go back to definitions, they are thought to be clear or state "a fact". Yet how can simulations or "impressions on the sight" be completely true?.

Baldonado, like other scholars, questions the "reality" of representations. This doubt is cast more succinctly by Edward Said cited in Baldonado (1996:4) in his study of the textual representations of the Orient or Orientalism. Said notes:

In any instance of at least written language, there is no such thing as delivered presence, but a re-presence, or a representation. The value, efficacy, strength, apparent veracity of a written statement about the Orient therefore relies very little, and cannot instrumentally depend on the orient as such. On the contrary, the written statement is a presence to the reader by a virtue of its having excluded, displaced and made supererogatory any such real thing as the Orient.

The foregoing reasoning clearly shows that representations cannot actually be the real depiction of the Orient. Instead, as Baldonado (1996:5) puts it, "they are constructed images... that need to be interrogated for their ideological content". In this respect, Shohat (1989:48) advises that representations should be constantly questioned. According to her, "each filmic or academic utterance must be analysed not only in terms of who represents but also in terms of who is being represented, for what purpose, at which historical moment, at which location, using which strategies and in what tone of address.

Stressing further the need for constant interrogation of representations Baldonado (1996:6) continues:

It cannot be ignored that representations affect the ways in which actual individuals are perceived. Although, many may see representations as harmless likeness, they do have a real effect on the world. They are meant to relay a message and as the definition shows, influence opinion and action. We must ask what ideological work these representations accomplish. Representations or the images or ideas formed in the mind have vast implications for real people in real context.

She posits that what is now referred to as “the burden of representation” arise from the issues of the “marginalized group” and the “minority representations”. Because the “marginalized groups” do not have “power over representation”, the mass media tend to take their representations as “allegorical” which implies that since the representations of the marginalized are few, the few available are thought to be representative of all marginalized peoples. Thus, trapped in the “hermeneutics of domination and overcharged with allegorical significance”, the minority groups, who constitute the “subalterns” of this world, are denied adequate representation. It is in a bid to reverse this trend that Spivak (1985) cited in Baldonado (1996:8) recommends what she calls “persistent critique” to prevent constructing the “other” simply as an object of knowledge, leaving out the real “others” because of the ones who are getting access into public places due to the waves of benevolence and so on.

As available literature shows however, attempts to move the marginalized group into the public sphere have not, in significant ways, altered “the structural or institutional barriers that prevent equal participation for all the representation” (Baldonado, 1996). So, according to Spivak (1985:26) the issue at stake is how to get the subaltern into the public space in the face of “the lines laid down by the official institutional structures of representation”. The big question, therefore, is to challenge the status quo representations, their hegemonic force and the ideological work they do.

Representation has played a key role in the understanding of literature, semiotics and aesthetics .from time immemorial. According to Childers (1995) quoted in Okoro (2010:43) ancient literary theorists such as Aristotle and Plato regarded literature as a major form of representation. According to Hall (1997:225) Aristotle posits that mimesis is “natural to man” and representations are necessary for human existence while Plato who was more cautious with representations believed that they create “world of illusion” leading one away from the real things. Mitchell (1990) cited in Okoro (2010:43) asserts that Plato was of the view that representation, like contemporary media, intervenes between a person and “real thing” and therefore ought to be “controlled and monitored” in view of its capacity to foster anti-social emotions or to encourage the imitation of evil.

Okoro (2010:43) states that these early views on representation notwithstanding, however, one understands reality through reality representations via discourses, images, texts, signs and so on, and that there is no such thing as unmediated access to reality. For the fact that representation is the way and manner in which phenomena are constructed and interpreted, culture as a people’s way of life constitutes a key factor for consideration in the way such phenomena are constructed as well as interpreted.

According to Dilworth (2004:30) representations in any society, more than any other interpretations or considerations, become visual prostheses, just like eyeglasses or binoculars through which one is able to see the actual object. Such ideologies (Ives, 2004:12) or prostheses (Dilworth, 2004:28) form structural impediments to meaning-making. In this wise, representations of reality become presentations of reality which are culture-bound.

According to Alvarado & Robin (1987:59) the key questions arising from this “constructed reality” are: what is being represented? How is it being represented, and with what codes and genre? How is the representation made to seem “true” or “real”? What is foregrounded and what is backgrounded in representation? Whose representation is it and whose interest does it serve? At whom is this representation targeted? What does the representation symbolize and signify?

Dellinger (1995) points out that since media representations of social groups such as children, adolescents, youth, men, women, elderly and so on usually categorize the different groups on the basis of stereotypical generalizations and perceived social reality, it logically follows that the meaning of reality largely depends on the way a given society defines it.

As a theoretical base for analysis, the key focus of the constructionist theory is to discover the modalities of participation by both individuals and groups in the manufacture of their perceived social reality. This involves the examination of the ways social phenomena are created, institutionalized and made into traditions by humans. In this vein, socially constructed reality is viewed as on-going and dynamic process whereby reality is created and reproduced by people, following their knowledge of such reality and its interpretations.

From the foregoing, it is evident that the constructionist theory appropriately provides the theoretical framework for this study. The relevance of the theory to the study therefore stems from the fact that, as Hodge & Kress (1993) quoted in Chilwa (2010:42) posit, media representation is not a matter of “truth” or “reality” but has to do with the way the particular text or material is meshed into the ideological/cultural system of the presenter. The strength of the theory lies in its ability to identify and



highlight the stereotypical codes of particular representation as well as analysing causal agents of the dominant representations.

## **2.7 Summary of Literature Review**

The literature review discussed media portrayals of the Niger Delta, ethnicity and regionalism in the Nigerian media, language in the media and theoretical framework.

NDDC (2000:1) observes that the Niger Delta remains the least developed area of the country in physical socio-economic terms. In view of these media coverage of the area has largely been viewed under media coverage of rural areas in Nigeria.

There is a body of literature such as Adesina (2000:9), Moemeka (1981:14), Pate (2005:35), Boafo (1987) and Opubor (1985) cited in Udoakah (2004: 127) to the effect that the region does not get adequate media attention. Awoshakin (2003:1) Sambe (2005:185) and Obijiofor (2008) quoted in Ijeomah (2012:24) agree that at best, the Niger Delta gets skewed coverage that focuses on violence.

Literature has actually proved that the Nigerian media toe ethnic and regional line in their coverage of issues and events in the country. Osaghae (1995:11) defines ethnicity as the employment of the mobilization of ethnic identity and difference to gain advantage in situations of competition, conflict or cooperation. Nnoli cited in Ukiwo (2005:8) states that ethnic feelings bring about certain attitude which distorts reality and breeds subjectivity in the evaluation of perception. He states further that ethnicity is the fundamental basis for identity and political cleavages in Nigeria.

Ake (1993) cited Yusha'u (2010: 8) expresses little wonder why prior to Nigeria's independence in 1960, the leading political figures of the time, Alhaji Amadu Bello, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe and Chief Obafemi Awolowo, preferred regional politics in order to become the premiers of their respective regions under.

It is essential to note that some of the key political players in the First Republic such as Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe and Chief Obafemi Awolowo were newspaper publishers. This according to Agbaje (1993:459) “meant the press had become inextricably linked with the emerging pattern of political rivalries often couched in geo-ethnic terms”.

Adebanwi (2004:82) cites examples where the Nigerian media took ethno-regional stands. One example is on the issue of the status of Lagos in 1953 when the *West African Pilot*, regarded as the mouthpiece of Nnamdi Azikiwe’s National Council of Nigeria and Cameroun (NCNC) wrote editorials and news stories demanding that every part of Nigeria should have a share in the capital while *Daily Service* which was supporting Chief Obafemi Awolowo’s Action Group (AG) through its own reports and editorials, wanted Lagos to be part of the Western Region.

Olukoju (2004) and Jibo & Okoosi-Simbine (2003) quoted in Yusha’u (2010:9) observe that the Nigeria media were divided along ethno-regional lines when in 1999, the then Speaker of the House of Representative, Alhaji Ibrahim Salisu Buhari, from the north, was accused of falsifying his age records and claiming to have attended University of Toronto in Canada. According to them, newspapers based in the south were more aggressive in condemning the act thereby forcing Salusi to resign. They point out that it was different case when Chief Bola Tinubu, the then governor of Lagos State in southern Nigeria was accused of falsely claiming to have attended University of Chicago in the United States. Yusha’u (2009) calls these regional, ethnic, sectional and religious considerations in the practice of journalism in the country “Regional Parallelism”.

There are studies in the literature which show that the Nigerian media have continued to exhibit ethnic and regional leanings in their coverage of the Niger Delta.

Yusha'u (2010) asserts that the Nigerian press has ethnic undertones in its coverage of the Federal Government's Joint Military Task Force (JTF) attack on Niger Delta militant camps and the quelling of the *Boko Haram* religious sect crisis in northern Nigeria in 1999. Isola & Akintayo (2012) and Ijeomah (2012) support this finding while Chilwa (2010 and 2011) reveal that there is an ideological undertone behind the Nigerian newspapers' construction of the JTF and the Niger Delta insurgents in their coverage of the Niger Delta crisis. Chilwa (2010) argues that the negative representations of the Niger Delta militia are an ideological strategy used to shift attention from the real issues of ethnic marginalization and exploitation of the Niger Delta. He asserts that the ideological strategy employed by the government and media consists of constructing the oppressed as the oppressors.

Studies have, over the years, underscored how the media create "reality" which is portrayed in the news. Such studies include Altheide (1976), Epstein (1974), Fishman (1998), Nimmo & Combes (1985) and Tuchman (1978). Shoemaker (1987 and 1996) explains that news is a human construction that gains its characteristics through the social world from which it emerges.

Fowler (1991:4) stresses the importance of language in the creation of reality in the news observes that the "content of newspapers is not facts about the world, but in a very general sense, ideology and in the construction of ideas in the press, language is not neutral, but a highly constructed mediator". Olowe (1993) cited in Taiwo (2005:223) identifies the various linguistic devices used by newspapers such as thematization, passivization and nominalization, in projecting their ideological view points. Taiwo (2005:244) states that beyond the generally observed rhetorical and graphological devices employed in newspaper headlines, there are also hidden

ideological meanings behind those written words. Chiluba (2010 and 2011), Hodge and Kress (1993), van Dijk (2005), McEnery (2005), Baker (2006) and Matheson (2005) all stress the significance of choice of words in shaping perception, and reveal how media language works ideologically. Fairclough (1995) quoted in Chiluba (2010:42) observes that the ideological work of the media language affects the way individuals or groups, identities and relations are represented. Particular construction of social identities would particularly define how their actions are to be judged or evaluated.

Fowler (1990:17) argues that underlying Galtung & Ruge's (1973) news value concept are the basic elements of stereotypes which he defines as a socially-constructed mental pigeon-hole into which events and individuals can be sorted, thereby making such events and individuals comprehensible. Omenugha (2004:169) asserts that the dominant image of the Nigerian woman portrayed in the news is based on stereotypes. Lule (1995:382-386) highlights the influence of stereotypes in the news. Drummond (1984) and Frye (1957) explain the use of myths also in news reports.

This study is situated within the constructionist theory of representational communications, in view of its nature and focus. This theory which was propounded by Gaye Tuchman in 1978 states that media content is constructed or reconstructed "reality", not reflected "reality". Constructionism means that reality in any given media text is created or constructed with the use of codes chosen to convey a particular meaning. Constructionism became prominent in scholarly discourses, following the publication of the book, *The Social Construction of Reality* by two sociologists, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann in 1966. The sociologists' thesis explains how

cultures use signs and symbols to construct and maintain a uniform reality. As an exploratory/analytical tool of inquiry, social constructionist theory has its root in studies on representations (portrayals).

Social constructionism can not be separated from the concept of representation (portrayal). It is like a paper with two sides. Representation refers to the construction in any medium (especially the mass media) of aspects of reality such as people, places, objects, events, cultural identities and other abstract concepts. According to Hall (1997:336), representation is simply the way or process in which phenomena are constructed. Omenugha (2005:107) states “representation (in simple terms) could mean using language to say something meaningful about the world to the other people, describing something to make it resonate with others or perhaps simply to symbolise”.

Many other studies on representation such as Mitchell (1994), Alvarado & Robin (1987), Diawara (1988), Dyer (1993) and Hall (2000), Chilwa (2010, 2011), van Dijk (2005), Faiclough (1995), Hodge & Kress (1993), Baldonado (1996), Shohat (1989), Louw (2001), De Certeau (1988) and Kitzinger (1999) were reviewed. Their findings have given rise to the various characteristics of representation, including that representation involves construction of reality, representation is selective, representation requires interpretations, and representation is culture-specific.

As a theoretical base for analysis, the key focus of the constructionist theory is to discover the modalities of participation by both individuals and groups in the manufacture of their perceived social reality.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter deals with the methods and step by step procedures that were employed in carrying out the study.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The study was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. It used a triangulated research design comprising Content Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The methodology was adopted to ensure a comprehensive analysis of the subject matter. According to Yeasmin & Rahman (2012:159), triangulation allows researchers to be more confident about their results because it minimizes the inadequacies of a single-method research. The design can also stimulate the creation of inventive methods and new ways of capturing a problem to balance with conventional data-collection methods. The advantage of triangulating different procedures lies in the fact that the flaws of one, is the strengths of another. Denzin (1989:244) states that by combining procedures/techniques, the researcher can utilize the strength of each while overcoming their unique deficiencies. According Weyers, Strydom & Huisamen (2011: 210), triangulation ensures comprehensiveness and completeness of the research, enhances ability to confirm trends, identifies inconsistencies and improves the reliability and validity of findings.

#### **3.3 Population of the Study**

The entire newspapers in circulation in Nigeria formed the universe of this study. A field study conducted in March and April 2009 for the Association of Advertising

Agencies in Nigeria (AAAN) showed that there were 150 newspapers published in Nigeria. These newspapers can however be categorized into three groups- national, regional and local newspapers based on their circulation rate (i.e. depth and broad of coverage of issues). There were 15 of such publications categorized as national newspapers with daily and weekend editions, as listed in <http://nigeriamasterweb.co/paperfrmes.html>, which was retrieved on February 10, 2010. A sample population was selected to represent the universe. Four of the national dailies - *The Guardian*, *Vanguard*, *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* - were chosen as sample for the study. In choosing the newspapers, consideration was given to the bases of the publications since the study sought to unmask the ethnic/regional undertones behind the construction of their reports on the Niger Delta.

### 3.3.1 Profiles of the Selected Newspapers

The following are the profiles of the sampled newspapers:

***The Guardian*:** The newspaper is based in Lagos, Southern Nigeria, the commercial verve centre of the country. Established in 1983, *The Guardian* is one of the Nigerian newspapers that pride themselves as being 'independent' of any political party, ethnic, religious or other groups.

***Vanguard*:** This publication is also based in Lagos. It was established in 1983 and began production in 1984. Its motto is "towards a better life for the people". Vanguard newspaper also prides itself as independent of any group, be it political, ethnic, or religious.

***Daily Trust*:** This newspaper is based in Abuja, the nation's capital which is located in the northern part of the country. The *Weekly Trust* and the *Daily Trust* made their debut in March 1998 and January 2001 respectively. The publication was the first newspaper to be established in Abuja.

**Leadership:** This publication is also based in Abuja in northern Nigeria. It was established in 2004 and its motto is “For God and country”.

*The Guardian* and *Vanguard* represented publications located in Lagos axis while *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* represented newspapers based in Abuja. The four newspapers are quality publications with both daily and weekend editions. They all report on national issues and publish regularly, with high circulation rates.

This study considered the headlines, news reports, features, opinions editorials and pictures in the newspapers on the events and issues concerning the region. Such reports in both the daily and weekend editions of the publications were analysed.

### 3.4 Sampling Technique

The simple random sample method was used to select the issues published by the four newspapers, between January and December 2008, period of the study, for analysis. The employment of the simple random technique gave every edition of each of the newspapers an equal chance of being included in the sample. According to Bannock, Hope & Oliver (1972) cited in Okoro (2010:60), the simple random technique shares the general characteristics of random samples in being independent of human judgment and subjectivity and therefore free of the prejudices and biases such judgment and subjectivity might introduce. The editions selected from the four chosen national dailies were done without replacement.

### 3.5 Sampling Size

Each of the four selected newspapers had 366 editions including Saturday and Sunday editions for the one-year period that was a leap year. This amounted to 1464 copies. Out of this number, a sample size of 228 was arrived at, using Taro



Yamene's statistical formula. The formula is given as follows:

$$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$$

Where:

- n = sample size required
- N = the population of the study
- e = standard error (6.1% assumed)

Where N=1464

$$\begin{aligned} n &= 1464 / (1 + 1464(0.061)^2) \\ &= 1464 / (1 + 1464(0.003721)) \\ &= 1464 / (1 + 5.447544) \\ &= 1464 / 6.447544 \\ &= 227.0632 \\ &= 228 \text{ (approximated)} \end{aligned}$$

This sample size represents 15.5 per cent of the population. The 228 copies were selected using a table of random numbers (see appendix vii), to constitute a representative sample of the editions published during the study period. This was done on a 50-50 basis, translating into 57 copies for each of the selected publications.

In selecting the editions, the first step taken was to close one's eyes and blindly point at a number which was eventually 38368, located on the third row and third column of the first page of the table of random numbers. The second step was to tag the number January 1, 2008 and going horizontally to the right, tag the next number, 45776, January 2. The tagging continued in that order till January 31 which corresponded with the number, 94501 on the third row and third column. This was followed by tagging the next number, 74547 February 1. The tagging of days to the

numbers continued in that systematic order till December 31, 2008 which corresponded with the number, 30661 on the forth row and eighth column on the next page of the table of random numbers. The final step taken was the selection of the tagged numbers which had their last three digits ranging from 001 to 228 (228 being the sample size statistically determined as explained earlier). By so doing, the first edition chosen was the January 13 which corresponded with the number, 29117, the reason being that the last three digits of the number amounted to 117. The second was January 14 tagged with the number, 39095 since the last three digits amounted to 95. The selection continued in that order, till the last edition which was the December 26 edition, corresponding with the number, 57202 on the forth row and third column of the second page of the table.

### **3.6 Period Chosen for the Study**

The period chosen for the study was January to December 2008. As earlier stated, the reason for the choice of the period of study was due to the crucial developments in the region during the period, with their socio-economic implications on the country.

### **3.7 Content Analysis**

The Content Analytic Technique was employed in analysing the data. Walizer & Wienrit (1978) cited in Okoro (2010:53) notes that this technique is a systematic procedure which seeks to examine the content of recorded information or data. The procedure aims at revealing the purposes, characteristics and dimensions of the manifest contents of the print media under study. According to Obikeze (1990:81), content analysis is very useful in arriving at an objective, systematic and quantitative description and explanation of manifest contents.

### **3.7.1 Units of Analysis**

Wimmer and Dominic (1987:174) observe that the unit of analysis is the thing that is actually in content analysis. According to them, the unit of analysis in written content might be a single word, symbol or a theme (a single assertion about one subject or entire article or a story). Headlines, straight news, features, opinions and editorials on the Niger Delta by the sampled newspapers formed the units of analysis of the study. These items were analysed in context of the dominant images of the Niger Delta they portrayed. The source, direction, position, frequency and length of such published items were also examined with a view to ranking their relevance.

### **3.8 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was also employed in analysing the data of the study. According to Taiwo (2005:218), CDA is a method of discourse analysis that reveals the way discourses are used everyday for signification, power relations and development of new knowledge. Wodak (1989:31) states that the approach is often called “Critical Linguistics” an interdisciplinary approach to language study with a critical point of view for the purpose of studying language behaviour in natural speech situations of social relevance. CDA studies the use of language as a social practice, paying attention to the social, economic and political issues that surround the meaning of the text. According to Fairclough (2009:163), it aims at contributing to addressing the social wrongs of the day such as injustice, inequality, domination and lack of freedom, by analysing their sources, and causes, resistance to them and possibilities of overcoming them. This implies that a critical analysis focuses on social problems particularly, with the aim of finding solutions to them. The research approach often exposes subtle methods used by those who exercise political, economic, religious, ethnic or other forms of power to oppress others.

Fairclough (2000:97) identifies three central tenets of CDA namely: social structure (class, status, age, ethnic identity and gender); culture (the generally accepted norms of behaviour in the society) and discourse (the words we use). The goal of CDA is also to determine the relationship among these central tenets. Taiwo (2005:223) states “our discourse reflects the societal norms and beliefs, that is, we say things in conformity with the way they should normally be said in our society, and there are certain things we do not say because the society has constrained us not to say them”. Likewise, our identity in the social structure is shown in the way we think, act and speak. A text is a record of communication which involves the presentation of facts, beliefs and the construction of identity of participants. It is produced by socially-situated speakers. It is therefore more than words spoken or written on the pages of books, but how such word are used in particular social context.

McGregor (2003) cited in Taiwo (2005:220) identifies an aspect of CDA which she calls the “discursive practices,” These are rules, norms and mental models of socially acceptable behaviour in specific rules or relationships used to produce, receive and interpret the message. Discursive practices, then, are the processes involved in speaking, writing, hearing and reading texts.

One domain of discourse to which CDA has been applied so much in the recent times is the media. Kaplan (1990:200) notes that the use of critical discourse analysis in Applied Linguistics is leading to the development of a different approach to understanding media messages. According to Fairclough (1989:76), applying this approach to media discourse will then explain the process in which social practices influence news production and how media texts in turn help influence society by shaping the opinions and views of those that read them. The description of the text

includes identifying the formal features of the text either of vocabulary or grammar available in the discourse type, (e.g. news) which the text draws upon and what other choices in the discourse type that could have been used instead. For example, the use of agency, metaphor, passivization, nominalization and other strategies indicates that choices have been made by the writer to present a viewpoint aimed at either to promote or undermine someone or an ideology or a belief. van Dijk (2001:1) maintains that a critical discourse analyst takes an explicit position, and thus wants to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality. Taiwo (2005:220) lists some of the CDA researches carried out on the media to include: how news reports are used to serve the interest of the dominant forces in the society (McGregor, 2003); how journalists adopt particular ideological-discursive structure to express the values of an ideological system (Kress, 1990) and how mental illnesses are portrayed in the media (Greg, 1996). Similar CDA studies done in Nigeria, include language, ideology and power relations in Nigerian newspaper headlines (Taiwo, 2005) as well as regionalism and ethnicity in the Nigerian press: an analysis of the coverage of *Boko Haram* and Niger Delta conflict in the Guardian and Daily Trust (Yusha'u, 2010).

### **3.9 Focus Group Discussion (FDG)**

The third research method adopted was the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). This is a form of qualitative study guided by a facilitator in which a group of people (6-12) are asked questions about their attitude towards a product, service, concept or idea. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk. Responses are recorded by the researcher who takes note of the facial expressions of the discussants. The recorded discussion is later transcribed and analyzed.

For this study, members of the focus group were asked the questions contained in the interview guide/schedule (appendix ii). Randomly selected reports (two from each newspaper) on the Niger Delta were given to members of the FGD in advance, to allow them enough time to critically read the materials before the interview session. The essence of this was to find out their interpretations of the framing of such reports during the interview session. The purpose of the FGD was to use the participants' interpretations of the reports as well as their views on the themes during the discussion, to validate or otherwise, the interpretations derived from the researcher's analysis of the construction of the reports.

### **3.9.1 Identities of FGD Members/Administration of Instrument**

Three focus groups were used for this study, one representing the southern part of the country and two representing the northern part. Members of the audience were drawn along the north-south dichotomy with which the Nigerian press and polity have been known, to ensure even spread of the newspaper audience. The reason for having two groups of discussants from the north was that in the course of the study, there was worry that the residential location of people could have an impact in colouring their views on particular issues. This worry necessitated the organising of another group discussion with newspaper readers from the north who are resident in the north. The members of the groups were university graduates and regular readers of national newspapers, drawn from different segments of the society. The essence of ensuring that members are people with such level of education is because considerable literacy level is required for effective participation in such a discussion. Owerri the capital of Imo State located in the southern part of the Nigeria was the venue for the session with the participants from the south. The first group of participants that represented the north, also interviewed in Owerri, was drawn from

members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and civil servants from the north, serving in the state. Abuja the nation's capital located in the north was then chosen as the venue for the discussion for the second group of northern participants. However, as will be seen later, there was no difference in the perception and interpretations of media messages on the Niger Delta by the two northern groups.

### **3.10 Techniques of Analysis/Analytical Procedure**

Under content analysis, the coding sheets (appendix iv) were used in coding the quantity of the manifest contents of the reports on the Niger Delta. The units of analysis were examined and coded in accordance with the following:

Topics covered, such as infrastructure, health, education, environment, crime, recreation, living, business, politics and conflict;

Sources of published items, example, government officials, militants, citizens, NGOs, media, police, corporate bodies, religious bodies, military and political parties;

Directional focus – favourable, unfavourable and neutral; positioning, such as front page, back page, inside page and sports page; Length of published materials (in words) graded as follows: 0-250, 251-500, 501- 750, 751-1000, 1000 and above. The critical discourse analytic methods were employed in interpreting the meanings embedded in the texts (see appendix v) while the recorded contributions of the participants during the focus group discussion were transcribed and analysed (see appendix iii).

### **3.11 Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted on April 30, 2011. The date which was a Saturday was chosen to enable participants have time to take part in the exercise. Getting the

members to participate on a weekday would have been difficult since many of them are public servants. The pilot group was made up of seven newspaper readers with whom a discussion on the subject matter was held. Questions on sundry issues on media coverage of the region were raised during the discussion. The exercise was aimed at identifying possible challenges to the method, with a view to refining the research instrument before the main study. It was reasoned that the exercise would present the opportunity for the articulation of the relevant issues concerning Nigerian newspapers and the Niger Delta, and such issues could help in fashioning out questions to be asked during the main group discussion.

These eventually turned to be so. The exercise brought to the fore, the need for proper time management. The difficulty in getting every participant to be punctual was noticed on the day of the pilot discussion. The pilot study gave an idea of the amount of time needed by a participant to contribute meaningfully to a topic. The pilot group discussion revealed the need to have more than one focus group, and select participants in a manner to ensure a national spread of representation in the body of discussants. It also presented the opportunity to see the need to give samples of reports on the Niger Delta to participants to read before the date of the main group discussion. It yielded vital themes which were probed further during the main study. With the articulation of all the issues discussed during the pilot study and other challenges revealed, the research instrument was sharpened for use during the main study.

### **3.12 Inter-Coder Reliability**

A pilot study was carried out in order to ensure inter-coder reliability. A sub-sample of the population was drawn and categorized by four independent coders who were



trained for five hours to reach agreement on definition of any variable where a rating was to be assigned. The essence was to detect and remove categories wrongly or poorly defined and standardize inter-coder reliability.

As recommended by Wimmer and Dominic (2003:157), at the end of the coding of the sub-sample, 25% of it was reanalyzed by the coders to determine the overall inter-coder reliability. The coders analyzed the frequency of appearance of the elements in the categories covered. This was followed by a calculation of the reliability coefficients in percentage of perfect agreement. The following inter-coder reliability on the content categories was arrived at: topic covered = .91, coverage focus = .87, sources of published reports = .88, directional focus = .92, positioning of published items = .89, length of published items = .90.

Various devices such as tabulation, numerization, labeling and columnization of cues and contents were adopted in the course of analyzing the data. This was to ensure that the inferences drawn as well as the findings were presented in a way that would make for easy interpretation and understanding. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed for the analysis.

### **3.13 Limitations of the Study**

This study adopted a triangulated methodology which increases the validity of research findings. Nevertheless, triangulation has its own limitations. Yeasmin & Rahman (2012:16) express fear that if the study is not clearly focused theoretically and conceptually, it will not produce a satisfactory outcome. According to them, another challenge of the methodology is the tendency for the researcher to use it to legitimize a dominant personally preferred method. Again, triangulation tends to generate masses of data and meanings. According to Bauer & Gaskell (2000:345),

approaching a situation from two or more perspectives, methods, theories or paradigms often produces contradictions because a social phenomenon tends to look different from different angles. However, the study tried to take care of these limitations by ensuring that each method complemented the other. Yeasmin & Rahman (2012:161) notes that “triangulation is possible and a good way to reap the benefits of both qualitative and quantitative method.”

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This study explored Nigerian newspaper coverage of the Niger Delta, seeking to examine their representation of the region. It also sought to unmask the ethnic and regional biases as well as ideologies underlying the newspapers' construction of the Niger Delta, if any. It adopted a combination of research designs involving Content Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). *The Guardian*, *Vanguard*, *Leadership* and *Daily Trust* newspapers were randomly selected for analysis from the 15 top national dailies at the time of study. The first two publications represent papers based in southern Nigeria, while the other two represent those based in the northern part of the country.

A sample size of two hundred and twenty-eight (228) editions of the publications was selected from the 1464 issues published between January 1 and December 31, 2008. All published items about the region (excluding advertisements, cartoons) were analyzed with regard to their manifest contents, rhetorical devices employed in construction them and reference to the objectives and research questions of the study. The following are the findings:

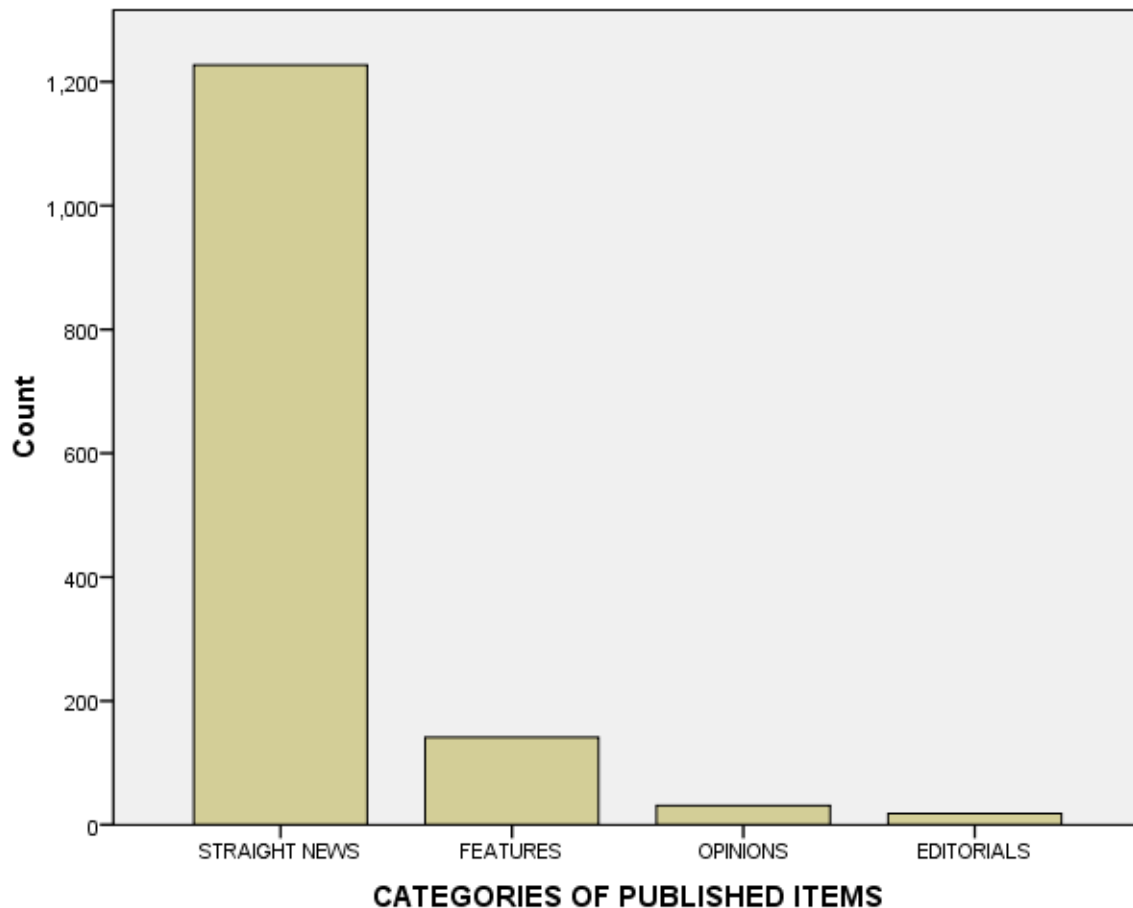
#### **4.2 Content Analysis**

##### **4.2.1 Categories of Published Items**

In this study, the published items analyzed were classified under four (4) categories namely: straight (spot) news, features, opinions and editorials. Each item published that had anything to do with the Niger Delta was coded and analyzed.

On the whole, 1417 items on the Niger Delta were coded and analysed. Figure 1 presents the degrees of the four categories as published by the newspapers

**Figure 1: Categories of published items**



As shown in figure 1, of the 1417 items published by the newspapers, spot news accounted for 1227 (86.6%) while features were 141 (10.0%). Opinion articles accounted for 31 (2.2%) and 18 (1.3%) editorials were published.

#### **4.2.2 Topics Covered**

Figure 2 presents the ratings of the ten classifications of topics covered. The published items in each class were in form of news, features, opinions or editorials.

**Figure 2: Topics Covered**

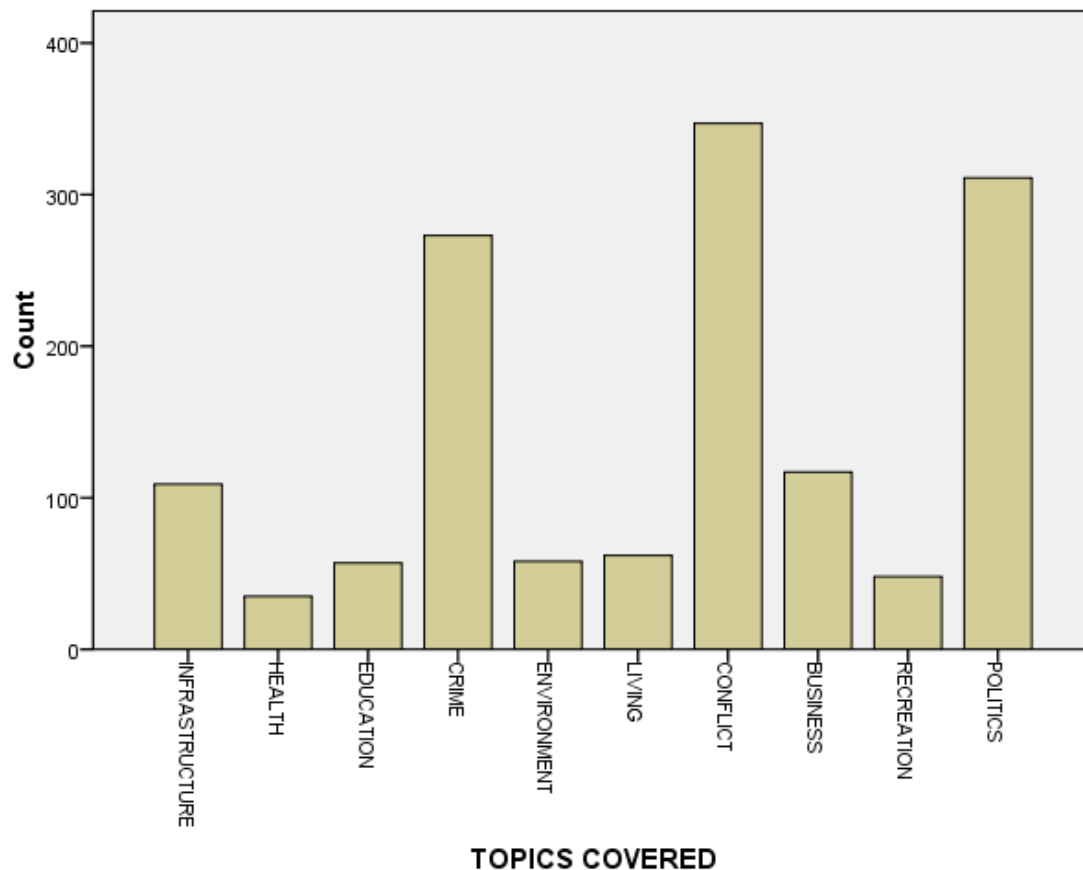


Figure 2 shows that the focus of the newspapers was mostly on conflict which accounted for 347 (24.5%) of the published items and followed by politics with 311 (21.9%). Also high on the table was crime which recorded 273 items and accounted for 19.3% of the published materials. The table indicates that the emphasis on other topics was low as business and infrastructure accounted for 117 (8.3%) and 109 (7.7%) of the published items respectively. There were only 62 items (4.4%) on living, 58 (4.1%) on environment, 57 (4.0%) on education, 48 (3.4%) on recreation and 35 (2.5%) on health.

#### 4.2.3 Coverage Density

**Table 1: Breakdown of Published Items**

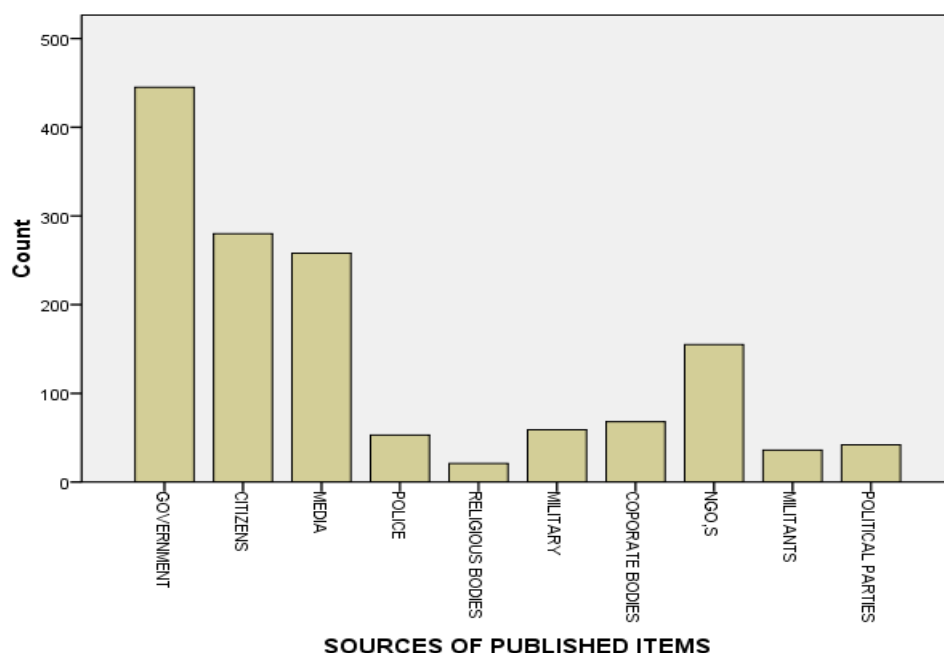
<b>Newspapers</b>	<b>Total Items</b>	<b>Items on Niger Delta</b>	<b>Items on Other Parts of Nigeria</b>	<b>% for Niger Delta</b>	<b>% for Others</b>
The Guardian	1531	337	1194	22.01	77.99
Vanguard	2459	770	1689	31.31	68.69
Leadership	1519	228	1291	15.00	85.00
Daily Trust	765	82	683	10.71	89.29
<b>Total</b>	<b>6274</b>	<b>1417</b>	<b>4857</b>	<b>22.58</b>	<b>77.42</b>

As shown in table 1, there were 6274 (excluding foreign reports) published by the four newspapers on the entire country during the time of the study out of which an impressive 1417 (22.58%) centred on Niger Delta. In this study, the Niger Delta was delimited as the South-South zone, one of the six geo-political zones in the country.

#### 4.2.4 Sources of Published Items

Items published were categorized as having emanated from the following sources: government, citizens, media, police, religious bodies, military, corporate bodies, NGOs, militants and political parties. Figure 3 shows the ranking of the sources.

**Figure 3: Sources of Published Items**

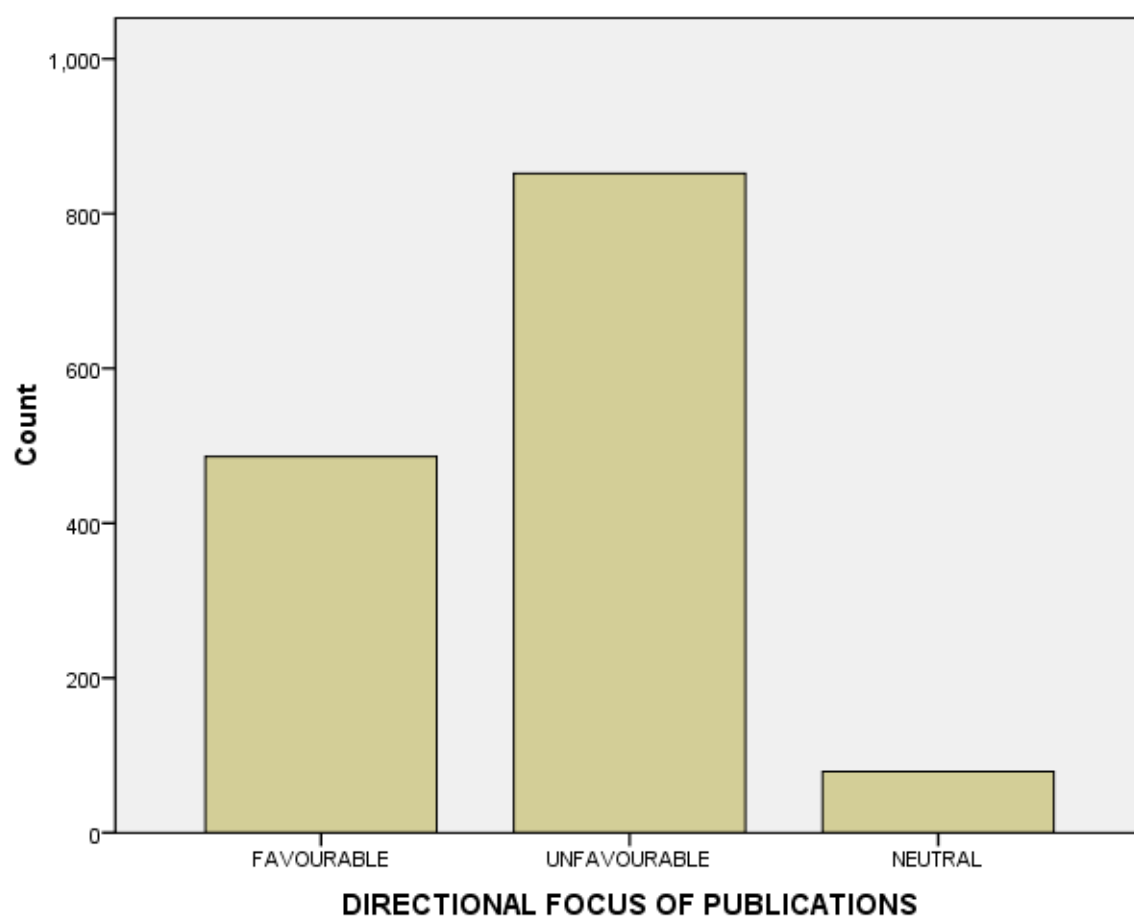


Government sources of the reports published as shown in figure 3, ranked top with 445 (31.4%). This was followed by citizens with 280 items (19.8%) and media with 258 (18.2%). The figure further shows that 155 (10.9%) of the reports were sourced from the NGOs while corporate bodies provided 68 (4.8%) of the published items. A total of 58 reports which amounted to 4.2% of the items published came from the military while the police provided 53 (3.7%). political parties accounted for 42 (3.0%) of the sources, militants 36 (2.5%) while religious bodies provided 21 (1.5%) of the reports published.

#### **4.2.5 Directional Focus**

The published items were furthered examined in terms of their being favourable, unfavourable or neutral to the Niger Delta. The dimensional quantitative assessment of this tri-focal assessment is presented in figure 4.

**Figure 4: Directional Focus**



As clearly shown in the table, 852 of the published items which translated into (60.1%) were unfavourable, 486 (34.3%) reports were favourable while 79 items were neutral, accounting for an insignificant (5.6%) of the study sample.



#### 4.2.6 Length of Published Items (Figure 5)

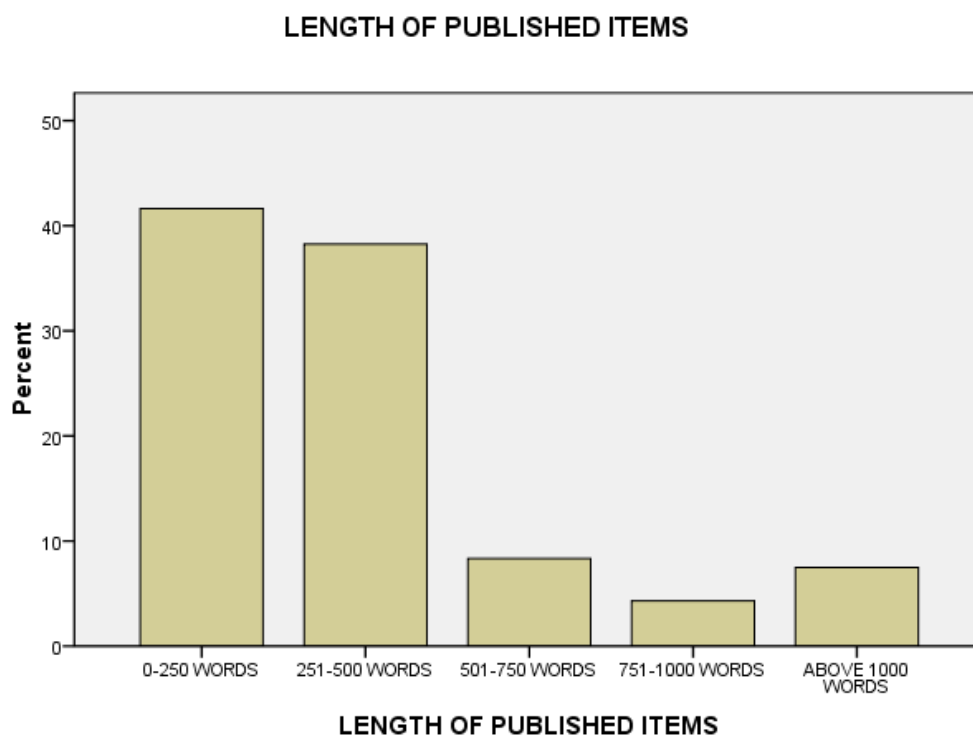
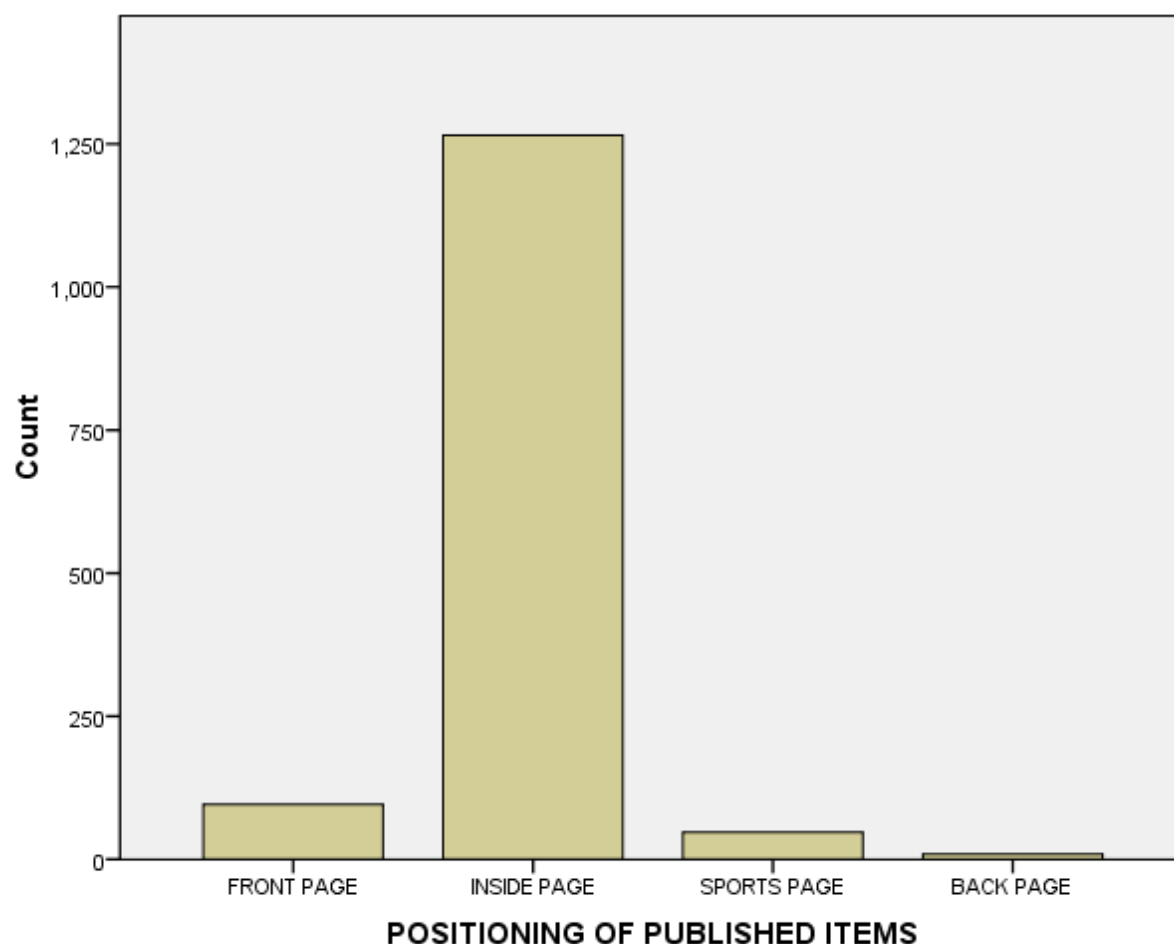


Figure 5 shows that 590 (41.6%) of the published items ranged between 0-250 words while 542 (38.2%) reports had between 251 and 500 words. The wordage of 118 (8.3%) reports was between 501 and 750. Published items having 1000 words and above accounted for 106 (7.5%) while 61 (4.3%) of the reports ranged from 751-1000 words.

#### 4.2.7 Positioning of Published Items

The published materials were analysed in terms of their placements in the newspapers examined. Figure 6 shows the positioning of the reports on the pages of the newspapers.

**Figure 6 Positioning of Published Items**



An evaluation of the placement of the published reports shows that the bulk of the reports on Niger Delta was placed on the inside pages. The number of these items published in the inside pages stood at 1265 translating into (89.3%). As also shown in this table, 86 items (6.8%) were featured on the front page, 47 (3.3%) on the sports page and 9 items translating into 6% were placed on the back page.

#### **4.3 Discussion of the Findings of Content Analysis**

There are quite a number of revelations from the results of the content analysis of the data generated. Firstly, is the high level of attention given to the region by the Nigerian newspapers, given the number of reports carried on it during the period of

study. Out of the 6274 published items (excluding foreign reports) on the entire country comprising six geo-political zones, 1417 (22.58%) were on the Niger Delta (see table 1). As can equally be seen from the analysis the Nigerian newspapers reported extensively on the Niger Delta. These reports comprising news, features, opinions and editorials, focused on infrastructure, health, education, crime environment, living, conflict, business recreation and politics (see figures 1 and 2).

Research question 1: how visible is the Niger Delta region in Nigerian newspapers? is answered with the data analysed, showing high visibility of the Niger Delta in the Nigeria newspapers. Also answered is research question 2 which sought to find out the types of reports on the Niger Delta available in Nigerian newspapers.

Equally revealing was the fact that the Nigerian newspapers portrayed the Niger Delta negatively. This negative representation was evident in the directional focus of the reports which showed that a larger number of published items 852 (60.1%) portrayed the region in unfavourable terms. Stories on crimes such as killings, kidnapping, robbery and other negative ones including vandalism and violent protests were found to have dominated in the publications. It was also found out that there was preponderance of stories portraying the people as quarrelsome, restive and always agitating in the newspapers. This is suggestive of media portrayal of the Niger Delta as an area dominated by restive, quarrelsome, and criminally-minded people. With direct reference to research question 3, which sought to find out the dominant images of the Niger Delta the stories portrayed, it was discovered that the overall images of the Niger Delta as portrayed by Nigerian newspapers were predominantly negative. The following are examples of such stories: "Oil War": No end in sight" (*Saturday, Vanguard*, September 20, 2008 p. 9); "Militant groups clash

in Bayelsa” ( *Vanguard*, Tuesday, June 24, 2008 p. 10); “Gunmen kidnap Delta SSG’s father” ( *The Guardian*, Monday, July 21, 2008); “Gunmen kill INTELS chief in Port Harcourt (The Guardian, Tuesday, December 30, 2008) and “Why we struck on Sunday – MEND (Vanguard, Tuesday, February 5, 2008 p. 6). The directional focus of the published items in the newspapers indicates preponderance of unfavourable reports, accounting for 852 (60.1%) of the entire published items.

These findings are in agreement with the findings of similar studies done on the Niger Delta (see Awoshakin, 2003; Sambe 2005; Bisina, 2005). It is evident that Nigerian newspapers have not deviated from their practice of prioritizing negative stories about the Niger Delta.

However, the predominance of negative stories in Nigerian newspapers can be explained by the fact that the media show preference for the negative in the news (see Galtung & Ruge, 1974; Braham, 1982).

From the data generated, it is also noticeable that government appears to have exhibited high level of concern on issues bothering on the Niger Delta by speaking on them. Government placed first in the ranking and accounted for (31.4%) of the sources. The data also revealed that newspapers recognised the citizens of the Niger Delta as sources of relevant materials for their reports. In addition to government actions and pronouncements on the region, Nigerian newspapers considered the people capable of speaking on issues and events concerning them. This recognition is evident in figure 3 which shows the people placing second in the ranking of the sources with (19.8%). Such recognition is exemplified in the following reports: “Okah: Clark threatens to sue FG” ( *Vanguard*, Tuesday, April 8, 2008 p. 10);

“Niger Delta: Our agenda for the summit” (The Guardian, Sunday July 13, 2008); “Mamamu tasks Ijaw on excellency” (*Vanguard*, Tuesday, June 27, 2008 p. 12); “Elite not responsible for Niger Delta militancy – Graham Douglas (*Leadership*, Sunday, January 13, 2008 p. 20) and “We are poised to re-write the story of Niger Delta – Akpabio (*Daily Trust*, Tuesday, April 8, 2008 p. 49).

It is also revealing that 841 (79.8%) of reports on the Niger Delta were short and straight news (see figure 4). Similarly, 1265 (89.3%) of the published items were tucked in the inside pages. On the face of it, it would appear that newspapers were negligent of the region in terms of the seeming shallow reports on the area and subsequent location of the reports in obscure pages. But, a critical examination of the situation further reveals that the Niger Delta case is not different from the traditional practice in newspaper reportage. Straight news stories occupy larger percentage of the news space. In the same vein, the high number of spot news as against the low number of features, opinions and editorials on issues and events bothering on an area, is in no way an indication of lack of attention by the media. The placement of a very high number of the stories conforms to the common and standard practice in journalism whereby the bulk of the published items are found in the inside pages. In most cases, larger bodies of news stories “announced” on the front page, are presented in the inside pages.

#### **4.4 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Published Items**

It has been revealed through the content analytical procedure, that the Nigerian newspapers represent the Niger Delta negatively. Out of the 1417 reports carried on the region, a total of 852 (60.1%) were negative. In this section, the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is employed to explore the discursive strategies used by

newspapers in bringing to the fore, the various themes that run through their reports on the Niger Delta.

CDA is a qualitative evaluation of media output aimed at revealing the ways discourses are used everyday for signification, power relations and development of new knowledge. As noted earlier, applying this approach entails explaining the process in which social practices influence news production and how media texts in turn help influence society by shaping the opinions and views of those that read them. It has also been noted that a critical discourse analyst takes an explicit position, and thus wants to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality. CDA takes care of limitations that characterise the use of only quantitative method in a study of this nature. It is for this reason that the triangulated research approach was adopted for the study.

The following story with a bold headline and many riders which appeared on the front page of *Vanguard* of Saturday, September 20, 2008, is typical of Nigerian newspapers' framing of reports on the people, issues and events in the Niger Delta: Oil War:

**MEND shuns N'Delta Elders.**

Clark begs.

10 militants feared dead in fresh MEND, JTF shootout.

Okumagba may be appointed N'Delta minister.

Ibori sues for Peace.

The declaration of oil war by the main militant group in the Niger Delta, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) sparked off gun duels between the militants and the Joint Task Force (JTF), on several fronts in the region yesterday leaving at least 10 suspected militants dead. The

militants however scored a hit when they destroyed a major pipe line belonging to Shell Petroleum Development Company at Elem Kalabari Cajuthone channel in Rivers State. Two South Africans that were caught in the shootout between the Joint Task Force and the militants were rescued. The South Africans were released following a plea for their release from Azuka Okah, wife of the detained MEND leader, Henry Okah. Former governor of Delta State, Chief James Ibori has also joined the fray, appealing to both factions to sheath their swords.

In the thematic categorisations that follow, similar reports on the region which dominate the Nigerian newspapers' news space are critically analysed, bringing to the fore, the manner of representation of the area.

#### **4.4.1 Thematic Representations of the Niger Delta Region**

In the representation of the Niger Delta, three thematic categorisations of reports on people, issues and events in the region are prevalent in the Nigerian newspapers. These themes which have been critically analysed are violence/war, kidnapping/abduction as well as insatiability/restiveness/ agitation/vandalism. In the analysis, an attempt is made to show how the themes constantly form a central focus in the reports, relegating to the background, the main issues of underdevelopment of the oil-rich region. As Chilwa (2011) argues, the purpose of the focus on the first two themes is to give legitimacy to government's deployment of troops to the region and justify the killings of militants and even civilians in the area. This study further argues that the representation of the people as insatiable and restive is ideological since it appears to justify government's hinging of its delay in developing the area, on absence of peace in the region.

#### **4.4.2 Violence and War**

In the following texts, the reader is inundated with a general image of violent war in the Niger Delta region. Text 1 for instance, gives an account of how 15 corpses were

recovered from Bonny Waters as a result of a “gun battle” between the Joint Military Task Force (JTF) and the “militants”. No doubt that the activities of the joint military force met some resistance from the insurgents, resulting in some form of violence, it is still doubtful whether there was indeed a “war” in Nigeria, occasioned by “incessant attacks” by the Niger Delta militant on “unsuspecting persons” (Text 1). Yet the “invasion”, hitting of target”, “ceasefire”, (Text 2) and activities of “gunmen”, “assassins” and “bandits” (Text 3) who always “attack” (Text 4) the JTF in the Niger Delta, portray the image of a charged war zone where “gangs” (Text 3) who create “hostilities” and “tension” (Text 5) engage military authorities in “shootouts” in the declared “oil war” (Text 6) . The newspapers represent the oil producing section of the country as highly insecure as “robbery gangs, raid banks”, (Texts 7, 8 and 9), as ‘oil thieves” (text 10) “cultists“, “miscreants” and “brigands” (Texts 11 and 12) hold sway. As the “war” continues, a civilian gets killed by a “stray bullet” (Text 13) in the battle involving “warring groups” (Text 13) and while the “strike” (Text 14) by MEND becomes unabated, fear has “gripped residents” of the coastal settlement of Bayelsa East (Text 14).

Text 1: 15 Corpses Recovered from Bonny Waters (headline). Following incessant attacks from the Niger Delta militants on unsuspecting persons which has often resulted in gun battle between the Joint Task Force (JTF) and militants in the region on the high sea, ten corpses suspected to be bodies of militants were again recovered from the Bonny Waters on Sunday. This brings the numbers of bodies so far found to fifteen within the last few weeks. Confirming the development, the Army Public Relations Officer, Col. Musa Sagir, said men of the Joint Task Force in the state encountered militants who were on ten speed boats two of which were sunk with the occupants. Our soldiers on ground also recovered four corpses of the militants and four AK 47 rifles. The militants who were chasing a supply vessel were the first to open fire and in the ensuing battle two of their boats were sunk with the occupants. (*Leadership* Tuesday, August 14, 2008 p. 14)

Text 2: Why attack on Bonga field was easy, by oil firms’ chiefs (headline). For all who wondered at the ease with which the militants hit Nigeria’s prized Bonga Oil Field target last week, major oil firm’s helmsman have a clue: Lack



of modern security facilities. They said that Thursday's invasion of Bonga oil fields by the Movement for the Emancipation for the Niger Delta would have been averted if radar were installed at the nation's prime block (*The Guardian*, Tuesday, June 24, 2008 front page).

Text 3: Gunmen invade Rivers' Dep. Speaker's Home (headline). Gunmen suspected to be assassins on Thursday night invaded the official residence of the Deputy Speaker of the Rivers State House of Assembly, Charles Befi Nwile, in Port Harcourt...The Joint Task Force spokesperson, Lt. Colonel Sagir Musa, who confirmed the incident said: "they were suspected assassins (*The Guardian*, Saturday, January 19, 2008 p. 3).

Text 4: Militants attack JTF in bid to recover seized crude (headline). Gunmen, weekend, attacked men of the Joint Task Force (JTF) on the Niger Delta at two separate locations in Delta State in an audacious bid to recover barges loaded with stolen crude oil that were confiscated with oil bunkerers by the military. The first attack, according to information available...was targeted at the JTF troops that seized four barges at Alogwe Creek, Benin River (*Vanguard*, Tuesday, June 24, 2008 p. 10).

Text 5: Rival Militants In Gun Battle In Bayelsa (headline). There was palpable tension in the presidency and Bayelsa State yesterday over confrontation between militia groups loyal to the peace pack initiated in the state and those against the process as they engaged in heavy gun duel over a planned invasion of creeks and waterways in the state... The first sign of tension and hostilities along the Bayelsa waterways emerged on Friday, following the release of the American, Jack Stone (*Leadership*, Tuesday, June 24, 2008 p. 2).

Text 6: Oil War: MEND shuns N'Delta Elders. Clark beg. 10 militants feared dead in fresh MEND, JTF shootout. Okumagba may be appointed N'Delta minister. Ibori sues for Peace (headline). The declaration of oil war by the main militant group in the Niger Delta, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) sparked off gun duels between the militants and the Joint Task Force (JTF), on several fronts in the region yesterday leaving at least 10 suspected militants dead. The militants however scored a hit when they destroyed a major pipeline belonging to Shell Petroleum Development Company at Elem Kalabari Cajuthone channel in Rivers State. Two South Africans that were caught in the shootout between the Joint Task Force and the militants were rescued (*Vanguard* Saturday, September 20, 2008 front page).

Text 7: Police recover N359m, \$50,000, #2000 from robbers in Rivers (headline). The police in Rivers State, Tuesday night, recovered N359 million, #2,000 and \$50,000 from a gang of robbers who had earlier in the day robbed bullion van in neighboring Imo State. Also recovered from the gang were assorted weapons. Also on Tuesday, men of the Joint Task Force (JTF) killed three militants in a gun battle at Abonema, Rivers State. A soldier died in the encounter. Among the weapons seized from the robbers were a General Purpose Machine Gun (GPMG), several magazines and bullets. The Rivers

State police Commissioner, Mr Bada Hassan, confirmed the incident, saying his command responded to a distress call from Imo police (*Vanguard*, Thursday, July 31, 2008 front page).

Text 8: Robbers raid bank in Delta (headline). ...the robber stormed the bank located in the heart of the town near a busy market after they failed to hijack a bullion van along Asaba-Benin highway, almost the same spot where a bullion van was ambushed and robbed of the sum of N91.5 million on the 13<sup>th</sup> of last month (*Vanguard* Tuesday, June 17, 2008 p. 12).

Text 9: Police smash woman lead robbery gang (headline). Men of the Delta police command have smashed a robbery gang led by a young woman in Asaba which was described as very deadly, just as another woman was arrested for allegedly setting Ogbeogonogo market on fire (*Vanguard*, Tuesday, October 21, 2008 p. 12).

Text 10: JTF Nabs Oil Thieves (headline). The JTF otherwise known as Operation Rescue Hope arrested the ocean-going vessel identified as MT Lina Panama and its crew...with their booty suspected to be stolen from the Niger Delta region...It was gathered that the JTF, using two gun boats blocked and confiscated the vessel on the high sea. The suspects had struck an illegal business deal with their Nigerian partners-in-crime prior to taking off from Greece in June (*Leadership*, Sunday, July 13 front page).

Text 11: JTF arrests 10 cultists in Port Harcourt (headline). About ten suspected militants and cultists were arrested yesterday when men of the Joint Task Force in Rivers State combed Abonnema Warf/Njemanze parts of the state capital in its bid to rid the area of miscreants and brigands. According to residents in the area, as early as 5am, they started hearing sporadic gun shots. Not knowing what was happening, many fled their houses (*Vanguard*, Friday, July 4, 2008 p. 10).

Text 12: Cult clashes claim 5 lives in Benin (headline). More than 10 persons have been reportedly killed in Benin in the last one week, following a renewed cult clash between rival cult groups from different higher institutions in the state....It was said that the crisis started one week ago when the leader of one the rival cult members (sic) was murdered around Ekenwa Road....The second in command of the murdered leader was also attacked in a night club as he tried to escape (*Vanguard*, Thursday, May 12, 2008 p. 10).

Text 13: 4 killed as JTF, militants clash in Rivers (headline). A soldier, two militants and a civilian have been confirmed dead in a gun fight between the military Joint Task Force (JTF) and suspected militants in Abonema, AkukuToru local government area of Rivers State.... Lt Col. Sagir added that the civilian was killed by a stray bullet during the gun fight between the warring militant groups and men of the JTF, who had responded to a distress calls from the residents of Abonema about the shootout by the rival gangs.

The JTF spokesman said that the sergeant was killed when the patrol van used by the soldiers ran into an ambush by the militants, adding that the van was badly damaged (*Daily Trust*, Thursday, July 31, 2008 p. 8).

Text 14: Why we struck on Sunday (headline).The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) said yesterday that last Sunday's attack on a military houseboat stationed at the Sell Petroleum TARA manifold in Bayelsa State by its men was a "minor attack" to commemorate the fifth month of incarceration of its leader, Henry Okah in Angola.... Meanwhile, fear has gripped residents of Bayelsa East senatorial district, bothering Rivers and Bayelsa States over possible military action in the area, following the Sunday attack by militants (*Vanguard*, Tuesday February 5, 2008 p. 6).

From the above reports it is clear that the crisis in the Niger Delta which has resulted in a face-off between the military and the insurgents has been largely constructed as a war situation. The violence/war theme running through the reports suggests an ideological construction of the Niger Delta as an area bedeviled by a breakdown of law and order, which only a Federal Government's military intervention can restore. The JTF which was primarily deployed to the area to protect oil installations appears to have gone beyond its mandate, to engage the insurgent in face to face battles. Text 6 for example, illustrates a war situation where one of the warring armies loses 10 men after fighting with the enemies on several battle fields. In text 8, civilians are apprehensive over a possible reprisal attack by one side which is capable of making them lose their lives too.

This study argues that it is outright exaggeration to characterize the Niger Delta crisis in terms of a guerilla war, and such characterization only tends to justify the military intervention and the killing of the "militants" who have "taken over" the place. This argument is supported by Chilwa (2011) which notes that the high level of human casualties and destruction of property in the region has attracted wide condemnation from both the local and international circles. The issue at stake here is not whether the events reported on actually took place, but the media representation

of the incidents. From the reports, it can be discerned that there is an implicit ideological construction of a war situation, aimed at legitimizing the military actions of the JTF as an important national assignment. Wogu (2010:13) notes that the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria as amended empowers the Federal Government to deploy troops to suppress any form of insurrection in any part of the country and restore order when the need arises. It can then be seen why any form of force used by the JTF to quell the activities of the militants considered as an act of insurrection or war against the country, is justified. Language is no longer seen as merely reflecting reality about the world, but as central to creating reality. Our words are never neutral, they carry the power that reflects the interests of those who speak or write (Fiske, 1994; Fowler, 1979). Any reader of the above reports cannot but perceive the region as a volatile entity and war zone, where youths engage in all manners of crimes, necessitating military intervention.

As earlier indicated in the content analysis, media priority for negative stories is not contestable. It is not in contention either that the reported incidents did actually take place in the region. The worry is in the framing of the reports by the writers who must *tell* the story. Bell (1999:236) describes journalists as “professional story tellers”. This implies that there are some *story-telling elements* underlying every news item. Perplexed by this telling element in news, Reah (2002:5) cited in Omenugha (2004) writes:

“We talk about “news stories”. Other texts that deliver information are not referred to as “stories”. We don’t talk about report stories” or “lecture stories” or textbook stories”. A story is an account of imaginary or past events, narrative tale, anecdote...*colloquial fib*. Why are news stories referred to in any way that gives them the status of fictional account? The definition “account of past events” may to some extent relate to a factual account, but carries the implication of interpretation, elaboration and the creation of a narrative.

The possibility of journalists exploiting this loophole in constructing the Niger Delta is quite high. The foregoing reports on the Niger Delta cannot be said to be free from value judgment which is personal and often subjective and inconsistent.

#### 4.4.3 Kidnapping/Abduction

Apart from the thematic representation of the Niger Delta as a violent and war zone, there is an ideological construction of the region as an entity dominated by kidnappers. Such negative stories on militancy as well as kidnapping and release of victims of abduction in the area, dominate the Nigerian press. The thorny and fundamental issue of redressing underdevelopment which the people have been clamouring for is systematically downplayed. The texts that follow illustrate this theme that runs through the newspaper reports:

Text 15: Gunmen kidnap Delta SSG's father (headline). The 70-year old father of the Secretary to Delta State Government, Chief Arthur Okowa, was yesterday kidnapped by four gunmen from his home at Boji-Boji Owa, Ika North East Council....A family source explained that the gunmen stormed the elder Okowa's residence at Mokwu Street....The source disclosed that the septuagenarian had just returned from an early morning church service at the local Anglican church at about 10.30am and was resting in his bedroom when a housemaid informed him that some visitor had come to see him (*The Guardian*, Monday July 21, 2008 p. 8).

Text 16: Gunmen kidnap two toddlers in Rivers State (headline). Two kids, Deborah and Francis Uduak, children of an Executive Officer of the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association, Mr Sunday Uduak, have been kidnapped. Their captors are demanding a N10 million ransom. Besides, five days after this kidnap, the whereabouts of Mrs Patricia Asita, wife of the lawmaker representing Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni/Ahoda West Federal Constituency, Mr Asita and 11-year old Chidi Nzerim, who were abducted in two separate attacks by hoodlums in Port Harcourt on Sunday, remain unknown (*The Guardian*, Friday, April 11, 2008).

Text 17: Royal father behind N-Delta kidnapping uncovered (headline). The story of certain persons in the Niger Delta sponsoring ransom-demanding, kidnap gangs and sea bandits as business thereby denting the credibility of the Niger Delta struggle has always sounded like make-belief until last month, when the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) clamped down on a self-styled royal father who allegedly maintains a gang of kidnappers/sea pirates in Bayelsa State....Fear is the beginning of wisdom in

the community, and at the last count, not fewer than 500 persons have fled the kingdom as a result to his threat to lives....He operated a military camp at the periphery of the community....(*The Guardian*, Friday, April 11, 2008 p. 4).

Text 18: Armed thugs abduct female magistrate in Warri (headline). A gang of eight armed thugs on Wednesday abducted a female magistrate, 31-year old Mrs Emuobome J. Bazunu-Sokoh. Investigations by Vanguard showed that the kidnap of Magistrate Bazunu-Sokoh was allegedly sponsored by a female colleague in the state who accused her and another colleague of dating her husband (*Vanguard*, Friday, September 26, 2008 p. 10)

Text 19: I watched as snipers killed six kidnappers (headline). Wife of the Secretary to the Bayelsa State Government, Mrs Augusta Ekeuwei, broke her silence on her seventeen days in captivity saying she watched in horror as snipers who rescued her from the jaws of death shot dead six of her kidnappers. The nursing mother said that it was by the grace of God that she survived what she described as the journey to the valley of death and prayed that not even her enemy should undergo what she past through (*Vanguard*, Tuesday, August 12, 2008 p. 10).

Text 20: Bayelsa SSG's wife narrates ordeal with kidnappers (headline) .Mrs Augusta Ekeuwei, wife to the Secretary to Bayelsa Government, yesterday, narrated her 17-day ordeal in the hands of kidnappers in the state....Ekeuwei said she urinated and defecated where she was confined by her abductors, adding that she also had her first menstruation after the delivery of her baby right there (*Daily Trust*, Tuesday, August 12, 2008, p. 2).

Text 21: Children protest spate of kidnappings in Rivers (headline). More than 300 children in Port Harcourt yesterday protested the rising incidents of kidnapping in Rivers State, and therefore challenged the state government to find a lasting solution to the problem....In presenting their grievances to the government, the children expressed fears that the security of their peers was no longer guaranteed in the state, unless the rate of kidnapping was reduced ....One of the protesting children, Precious Obasi, said children in the state opted to visit the Government House to seek peace and to appeal to the state governor to urgently address the wave of kidnapping being faced by children and women(*Daily Trust*, Monday, May 12, 2008 p. 2).

Text 22: Kids, mothers match against kidnapping (headline). Children and mothers in Rivers State yesterday ignored the growing insecurity in the state to protest against their ordeal in the hands of gunmen. With placards of various inscriptions, the worried mothers and children marched to the Government House in Port Harcourt where they told Governor rotimi Amechi that gunmen had made life unbearable for them (*The Guardian*, Monday May 12, 2008 front page).

Text 23: JTF nabs 3 suspected kidnappers in Rives (headline). Three suspected kidnappers were rounded up yesterday by the Rivers State Joint Task Force at Ogbakiri in Emeoha Local Government, just 12 hours after Mr Eni Odili a nephew of former governor of the state was set free by those who

kidnapped him last Sunday. His kidnappers demanded N80 million but later brought the demand down to N50 million. In the interim, the abductors of the two toddlers who were seized while being taken to school on Tuesday in Choba along Airport Road have demanded N80 million as ransom for the release of the children. Vanguard reliably gathered from a security source that the three suspects were members of a notorious cult group operating at Emohua which specializes in hostage-taking, banditry and brigandage of the worst form (*Vanguard*, Thursday, February 28, 2008 p. 10)

In the above texts, the headlines which are strategically structured vividly portray the image and theme of kidnapping that run through the stories on the Niger Delta. This image of criminality is further amplified in the subsequent leads that follow, leaving the audience with the impression that the act of kidnapping, especially women and children, has remained the only business of the youths of the area. Texts 21 and 22 orchestrate on how women and children protest the rising incidents of abduction in the region. Text 17 shows how even traditional rulers of communities have turned kidnappers, instead of being role models and custodians of the people's culture which abhors crimes while Text 18 illustrates how servants at the temple of justice also get involved in the horrifying criminality of kidnapping. Chilwa (2011) observes that the information expressed in the headline is used by the reader in the process of interpreting the news to construct the overall meaning of the text. The theme and the headline information are used to activate the relevant knowledge in the memory of the reader in order to understand and evaluate the news report (Van Dijk, 1991). This implies that the use of words such as "kidnap", "abduct", "ransom" and "captivity" in the headlines and bodies of the stories, reawakens the stereotypical knowledge of the reader about kidnapping and the Niger Delta region. This knowledge consequently shapes the readers' perception and interpretation of the reports.

The argument of this study is that the representation of the region with main focus on the activities of a few individuals who engage in kidnapping and abduction of others, is ideological. The spate of the crime in the area as constructed is very alarming and requires a very drastic measure to curtail and such drastic measure is the Federal Government's massive deployment of troops to the region. Kidnapping is not peculiar to the Niger Delta, to warrant the deployment of military personnel who, in the process of "rescuing" victims, kill other people as shown in Texts 19 and 20. In such a "rescue mission", the JTF is positively represented as "operation restore hope", in line with the "we" positive construction and "them" (kidnappers) negative representation. This position of the study finds support in Chiluwa (2011) which notes that certain representations or negative labels have the tendency to establish some negative cultural norms around a group of people. He further adds that the frequent representation of the clampdown on agitation by ethnic minorities in the Niger Delta as mere war against kidnappers, is a mere evaluative judgment, and not factual. In other words, the Nigerian newspapers' hype on kidnapping, ideologically justifies the activities of the JTF in the Niger Delta.

#### **4.4.4 Insatiability, Restiveness, Agitation and Vandalism**

Outside the realm of representation of the Niger Delta in terms of violence, war and kidnapping, the Nigerian newspapers adopt a writing style which portrays the people of the region as insatiable, restive, always agitating, always vandalising public property and always engaging in communal clashes. The following excerpts illustrate this theme which, as will be seen, has been ideologically constructed, suggesting a justification for government's delay in or lack of commitment in addressing the developmental needs of the people. Government always premises development on prevalence of peace as shown in some of the excerpts.



Text 24: Clark gives conditions for talks with FG (headline). Former Federal Commissioner for Information, Chief Edwin Clark, says the Niger Delta people will consent to holding talks with the Federal Government on the region, but not on All Nigerian Summit, only after a technical committee had reviewed all the earlier reports dating back to 1958, submitted to the government and come out with a coordinated position that will be endorsed by the people at a regional conference. He recalled that the people of the South-South walked out of the National Political Reform Conference which was a Nigeria summit in 2005 and vowed not to come back to any such summit.... We have been in Abuja discussing with the federal government on the Niger Delta problems, withdrawal of Prof. Ibrahim Gambari and the way forward, which is that all the reports from 1958 till date be implemented after a technical committee would have reviewed the reports. Our position still remains that there is no need for all Nigerian summit as proposed by the federal government (*Sunday Vanguard* of July 13, 2008, p. 10).

Text 25: Niger Delta summit, another ploy to waste money-IYC (headline). Eastern zone of the Ijaw Youth Council have dissociated themselves from the proposed summit on the Niger Delta with Professor Ibrahim Gambari as chairman. In a statement issued yesterday in Port Harcourt, and signed by the Chairman of the body, General Alaibe Horsefall, they said the summit was another ploy to waste money generated from the region. They continued that the lasting solution to the problem of the region was for government to show genuine commitment and sincerity to develop the area (*Vanguard*, Wednesday, June 24, 2008, p.10).

Text 26: MOSOP condemns oil blocks allocations (headline) The President of the Movement for the Support of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Mr Ledum Mitee, has described as unacceptable, the current practice of sharing people's ancestral lands, farmlands and backyards from Abuja in the name of oil blocks allocation without reference to the owners of the land. Mitee in an interview described the practice as a travesty of justice which could be compared to the colonial sharing of African territories at the Berlin Conference. Lamenting the plight of the oil and gas rich but undeveloped Niger Delta, the MOSOP leader described as unacceptably discriminatory and unjustifiable, the anomalous situation in the country's law which permits a tripartite arrangement between the government, the company and local community in the case of solid minerals and appropriating everything, including peoples land in the case of oil and gas....(*Vanguard*, Friday, March 7, 2008 p. 11).

Text 27: Group Expresses Lack of Confidence In NDDC (headline). A Non-Governmental Organization, (NGO) tracking development in the Niger Delta, says it lacks confidence in the capacity of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to meet the expectations of the people of the region. Mr George-Hill Anthony, national Coordinator of the Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group (NDBMG) told journalists in Port Harcourt at the weekend that patronage was a major problem of the commission (*Leadership* Sunday, December 30, 2008 p. 7).

Text 28: Delta North leaders fault relocation of NYSC camp to Oghara (Headline). The last may not have been heard about the controversial relocation of the National Youth service Corps (NYSC) orientation camp from Issele-Uku in Aniocha North council of Delta State to his hometown, Oghara, by former Governor James Ibori...three weeks to the expiration of his tenure.

...We are therefore surprised that his (i.e. Governor Emanuel Uduaghan's present administration) will overtly promote the continued marginalization of the district by endorsing the ignoble act of the past regime and authorizing the development of the Oghara camp site instead of taking after the bold and honourable steps of the President Umaru Yar'Adua who has virtually reversed all the unwholesome decisions of the past administration (*The Guardian*, Friday, February 8, 2008 p. 5).

Text 29: Ogulagha youths chase Agip workers from flow stations (headline). Some youths from Ogulagha community in Burutu Local Government Area of Delta State invaded the Beniboye Flow Station, operated by the National Agip Oil company and chased away the workers from the oil installation....A source who distanced militants from the incursion said it was purely a protest action by Ogulagha youths, working for a contractor for the company. Their complaint is that the company has refused to give permanent jobs. They want to be given full employment, not working for a contractor to the company. A member of the Delta Waterways Security Company, Chief Second Benikraku, is already talking to the protesting youths who vowed not to leave the oil facility until Agip offers them permanent jobs. ...It was learnt that Agip has already conceded to take the youths for training in Asaba before their employment would be formalized but the youths, insisting that they had been enslaved for many years, demanded that they should be given employment before any programme in Asaba....(*Vanguard*, Friday, March 7, 2008 p. 10).

Text 30: Irate community chases out Shell officials (headline). Officials of Shell Petroleum Development Company SPDC-West, were yesterday at Uzere, Isoko South council of Delta State chased out of the community by the entire people for unfulfilled promises even as they gave the oil giant a 21-day ultimatum to complete a six years cottage hospital and ten year epileptic water projects or have their operations shut down. The SPDC team led by Mr Yemi Awoloha, the community Interface Coordinator, Land Area, West, had gone to the oil rich community for this year's SPDC organized 'people's parliament' where lecture on various topic of mutual benefits would have been delivered....They said it is indeed painful, shameful and inhuman for SPDC to operate in Uzere for over 50 years and the people are denied basic amenities (*Vanguard*, Friday, April 11, 2008 p. 10).

Text 31: Youths 'll disrupt proposed gas pipeline to Lagos unless..., IDA warns (headline). Chairman of the Iwere Development Association (IDA), an Itsekiri group in Warri, Delta State, Comrade Omolubi Newewum, yesterday warned that the youths of the Niger Delta would disrupt the proposed gas plant pipeline from any of the Niger Delta states to Lagos by the Federal government, describing the plot to alter the national master plan as a sheer madness by government to further marginalize the people of the region. (*Vanguard*, Monday, August 25, 2008 p. 12)

Text 32: Thugs invade Oredo LG secretariat (headline). Pandemonium broke out yesterday at the Oredo Local Government headquarters of Edo State, after scores of thugs invaded the council, beat up the leader of the legislative arm, Mr. Fuster Iyambge, and vandalized his office. Mr Iyambge who was half naked when newsmen arrived the secretariat, accused the Chairman of the council Mr. Nosa Ehima, of masterminding the attack because the lawmakers ordered him to appear before and explain the income and expenditure of the council since January this year. But in a swift reaction, the council boss denied the allegation saying, that the lawmakers declared war on his administration because he refused to honour what he described as “unreasonable requests” of N1.7 million instead of N700,000 being given to them monthly (*Vanguard*, Wednesday, July 16, 2008 p. 11)

Text 33: Communal clash erupts in C/River over mining rights (headline). A move by community leaders in Gabu in northern Cross River State to allow Emo Ashupura, the company granted mining rights of barite to have access to the place, has led to the communal clashes in the area, resulting in the burning down of houses and leaving many people seriously injured.” (*Vanguard*, Thursday, July 31, 2008 p. 10).

Text 34: Calabar monarch tussle takes new turn (headline). The lingering kingship tussle in Calabar that culminated in the crowning of Edidem Bassey Ekpo Bassey II as Obong of Calabar Sunday, has taken a fresh turn as another faction which describes itself as ‘The Etebong Conclave of the Palace of Obong of Calabar’, has declared another man as the Obong of Calabar. A release issued by the conclave and jointly signed by the Chairman of the conclave Etubom Okon Etim Asuquo III, and the Secretary, Etubom Micah Archibong VI noted the proclamation of the head of Adiabo Ikot Mbo Otu House, Western Calabar Etubom Ekpo Okon Abasi as Obong of Calabar. The conclave further noted that the proclamation followed the passing away of Edidem (Prof.) Elijah Henshaw VI. In a statement in Calabar, the Mkpisong Ukara Ekondo Efik, Dr Ambrose Akpanika noted that it is no news that succession to the throne of Obong of Calabar has been plagued with a history of controversies over the years (*Vanguard*, Tuesday, April 8, 2008 p. 10).

Text 35: Obong’s stool: new Obong may face committal proceedings (headline). As the lingering crisis occasioned by the installation of the new Obong of Calabar continues, following the traditional illness of the former Obong of Calabar, Prof. Nta Elijah Henshaw IV, a High Court sitting in Calabar has given notice to Etubong Essien Ekpenyong Efiok ... and the Obong of Calabar, Etubong Ekpo Okon Abasi, that the court shall on Wednesday May, 21, 2008 show cause why order of committal should not be made against them. (Leadership, Monday, May 12, 2008).

Text 36: Why Niger Delta summit of stakeholders is essential by FG (headline). Against the background of certain misconceptions, about the summit of stakeholders in the Niger Delta planned by the Federal Government, President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua wishes to reaffirm his continued commitment to the summit as a critical step and take-off point for

the implementation of his administration's agenda for peace and rapid socio-economic development in the region. As President Yar'Adua has often stated, peace and security are essential preconditions for meaningful development. One of the primary objectives of the stakeholders' summit is to evolve an across board consensus and commitment from all concerned parties to end the incessant violence in the region and engender a much more conducive atmosphere for the massive improvement of infrastructure and social services in the region (*Vanguard*, Friday, July 4, 2008 p. 12).

Text 37: Why Niger Delta Summit must hold – FG (Headline) Against the background of skepticism being expressed over the proposed Niger Delta Summit, President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua yesterday reaffirmed that the summit would not be another "pointless and diversionary jamboree, as some fear". Restating his commitment to the summit, Yar'Adua described it as a "critical first step and take-off point for the implementation of his administration's agenda for the socio-economic development in the region. In recent times, the proposed summit has been dogged by many controversies ranging from its desirability (in view of many existing committee reports on Niger Delta crisis) to the appointment of its chairman... According to Adeniyi, President Yar'Adua believes that peace and security are essential preconditions for meaningful development of the region (*Daily Trust*, July 4, 2008, front page).

Text 38: Niger Delta Crisis: A Nightmare, Says Yar'Adua (headline). President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua has expressed disappointment in the lingering crisis which drives away investors from the Niger Delta, describing it as a nightmare to his administration. He said the situation in the oil-rich region has not only become a major concern to his administration, but also posed a serious threat to the economy of the country and scaring away investors in the region (*The Guardian*, Sunday, October 5, 2008 front page).

Text 39: Niger Delta gives me nightmare – Yar'Adua (Headline) President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua yesterday said that the Niger Delta crisis gives his administration nightmare. He regretted that the crisis in the region had become a major concern to the Federal Government as it poses a serious threat to the economy and scaring away investors from the Niger Delta (*Vanguard*, Sunday, October 5, 2008 front page).

In texts 24 and 25, an impression is created that government has woken up to its responsibility of addressing the developmental problems of the Niger Delta. A summit is planned where, presumably, strategies for the development of the area will be evolved. Nonetheless, the people are constructed as being opposed to it and always trying to forestall government's initiatives as "our position still remains that there is no need for all Nigerian summit as proposed by the federal government"

(Text 24) and “the summit was another ploy to waste money generated from the region” (Text 25). In texts 36, 37, 38 and 39 government points at such opposition to its initiatives as capable of undermining peace in the region and causing delays in the development of the oil-bearing region. Government always says that there can be no development without peace. This study argues that the representation of the people in this manner is ideological since it appears to justify government’s hinging of its delay in or lack of commitment to developing the area, on absence of peace in the region. In the first place, it is the perceived absence of government’s attention that the people complain of and Government’s excuse that “peace and security are essential preconditions for meaningful development” (Texts 36 and 37) appears questionable and judgmental.

The foregoing themes are the central focus of reports on the Niger Delta instead of the main problems of under development of the region and its solutions. However, Nigerian newspapers sometimes highlight such problems and their solutions as exemplified by the following texts:

Text 40: *Seriously, how to solve Niger Delta problem* (headline) It is said in the Nigerian military that you will never find a poor admiral. It is easy to see why. Nigeria loses between \$4 billion and \$18 billion worth of oil a day to illegal bunkering... On a bad day, 25 per cent of the Nigeria’s oil exports are illegal. If the trend continues, new exploration will become impossible. Nigeria cannot afford to choke the golden goose that lays the golden egg. The Niger Delta crisis started as a legitimate struggle by ethnic Ijaw groups with strong cause for discontent with oil companies operating in the region as well as with government.... The military has been trying to halt the insurrection since 2000 without success. So, what do we do? Despite the severity of the problem, there is a solution and it must be implemented with conviction. Remember the vast majority of people in the Niger Delta have not benefited from oil. They have no power, no water, no services and no jobs. Government is to demonstrate political will to gain the support of the local population. They built our modern capital, Abuja using one per cent of the federation account. The cities of Port Harcourt, Warri, Eket and Yenogua should look more like Abuja (Vanguard, Friday July 4, 2008 front page).

Text 41: Senator laments Niger Delta situation (headline). From kano State he came to the Niger Delta region, and with voice laden with emotions he declared to his colleague: “believe me, anywhere I go to now, I know exactly what is going on in my country. I live in the same country with these people and I feel really ashamed to be calling myself a Nigerian, seeing what is going on in the Niger Delta. Bello’s summation of his visit with other colleagues to the creeks was part of emotional outbursts from the lawmakers who put much of the blame for the neglect of the region squarely at the doorstep of the political leadership of the region, the federal government and the militant youths (*The Guardian*, Sunday, January 13, 2008 p. 3).

Text 42: Niger Delta Conflict as Lingered Sore (headline)...Spilled oil from vandalized or aging pipelines has adversely affected the people’s mainstay, fishing, even as oil companies consistently accuse locals and oil thieves of rupturing the pipelines to extort compensation payment. In Ogoniland in Rivers State where oil was discovered in commercial quantity by Anglo-Dutch Shell in 1957, just one year after the discovery of Nigeria’s first commercial deposit in Olibiri, Bayelsa State, there is little or nothing to show for oil exploration apart from degradation from spills and gas flaring. (*The Guardian* of Saturday September 20, 2008 p.8)

#### **4.5 Characterization of the Actors and their Actions**

van Dijk (1995) and Weyden (2005) note that words or expressions in a text are often carefully chosen from a wide range of available options to construct and characterize certain people, social relations or events in a particular way to reinforce and legitimize the ideology that has been communicated in the themes of the discourse. As earlier observed, despite the hounding of the people of the Niger Delta and unleashing of brutality on the civilian population by the JTF, the Nigerian newspapers have continued to represent positively the activities of the military task force. As stated earlier, the stand of this study is that the Niger Delta crisis has been orchestrated in the newspapers in a manner to justify the onslaught of the military outfit on the people, instead of protecting the oil installations and maintaining peace in the region. Some general characterization of the JTF and its actions in relation to the insurgents is examined in the excerpts that follow. These samples of news reports on the identities and activities of the military task force show that the Nigerian

newspapers characterise the JTF within the ideological framework that excused its brutality on the people. The texts are quotes showing the voices of government and military officials, which in a manner represent the stand of the newspapers themselves:

Text 43: Commander of the JTF, a.k.a. Operation Restore Hope, Brigadier-General Nanven Rintip, says the military is on the trail of a large cache of arms, including General Purpose Machine Guns (GPMGs), AK 47, moved to some parts of Warri and Effurun by some criminals to disturb peace in Delta State. Speaking to newsmen at the JTF headquarters in Effurun, Delta State, Rintip who said that the militant activities have drastically reduced in the state, said men of the Operation Restore Hope would not fold their arms and watch some miscreants make nonsense of the comparative peace that has returned to the oil city and environs (*Vanguard*, Tuesday, March 18, 2008 p. 10).

Text 44: According to the Army spokesman, men of the Joint Task Force in the state, encountered the militants who were in ten speed boats; two of their boats were sunk with the occupants and our soldiers on ground recovered four corpses of the militants and four AK 47 riffles. The militants who were chasing a supply vessel when they ran into a team of JTF on waters, were the first to open fire" (*Leadership*, Tuesday, August 14, 2008 p. 14).

Text 45: Determined to ensure peace, the Rivers State government yesterday admonished militants in the state to lay down their arms. The state said the appeal became necessary not to allow such militants suffer the fate that has befallen the wanted leader of the People's Liberation Force (PLF), Saboma Jackrich (also known as Ebri Papa) who was arrested on Sunday by the Joint Task Force (JTF)... He admonished the so-called militants who are still at large to surrender their arms and avoid being caught up by the long arms of the law (*The Guardian*, Tuesday, December 30, 2008 p. 3).

Text 46: ...On the capture of the kidnappers, he said that intelligence report and snap operation at Ogbakiri led JTF to their hideout, giving the names as Stanley Nwohali, Junior Nworji and Nwobodo Bright. He said the three suspected persons were arrested at 8.45 hours yesterday at Ogbakiri in Emeoha Local Government Area (*Vanguard*, Thursday, February 28, 2008 p. 10).

Text 47: ...confirming the major arrests, Rintip said that it was a testimony to the effort of the task force in curbing oil bunkering in the nation's oil region. He disclosed that the suspects would be transferred to Abuja for further interrogation (*Leadership*, Sunday, July 13, 2008 p.5).

Text 48: According to spokesperson of the military body, Lieutenant Col. Sagir Musa, the militants in eight speed boats had attempted to attack the refinery jetty but were successfully repelled by men of JTF on ground. Sagir said that

during an exchange of fire, soldiers sank three of the speed boats belonging to the militants. And he feared that the occupants had died (*Saturday Vanguard*, September 20, 2008 p. 5).

As can be discerned from the above texts, the Nigerian newspapers give positive characterization to the JTF in line with the general belief of the government, political class and policy makers. In text 43, for instance, the task force is referred to as “Operation Restore Hope” hence characterized as those that restore the lost hope of the people of the Niger Delta. The report is silent on the illegitimate method used in trying to secure “peace” in the Niger Delta as it was in text 1, where “10 bodies suspected to be militants were recovered from the Bony Waters on Sunday”. In text 44, the “militants” are characterised as wolves chasing an innocent prey (supply vessel) when they suddenly run into the hunters looking for them. The characterization of the JTF as hunters in this case is positive since they are after dangerous animals. Government, in text 45, approves of the activities of the JTF who are characterised as being poised to get rid of criminals in the area and “admonishes militants in the state to lay down their arms” to avoid being “caught up by the long arms of the law”. Ironically, while the activities of the “militants” are unlawful, the killing of the civilian population in the region by the JTF is characterized as lawful. In text 46, the JTF’s “capture” of the insurgents in their “hideout” is again characteristic of a hunter in pursuit of some dangerous animals threatening the lives of the harmless prey while in text 47 the JTF’s arrest of the insurgents is characterized as a “testimony” to its “efforts in curbing oil bunkering in the region”.

#### **4.6 Labeling**

According to Chilwa (2011), Labels refer to specific lexical items or “tags” that sort out persons or a group into specific social categories that determine how members of the public should understand and judge their actions. He further posits that labels



express value judgments and therefore are not value-free representations of facts. A label naturally projects a mental model which eventually influences value judgment and a value judgment is personal, often subjective and inconsistent (van Dijk, 2005; Matheson, 2005). This implies that labels, whether positive or negative, to a large extent, define the identity of a person or group of persons. Very often, the negative labels are more powerful and have greater inherent social consequences. When labeling becomes long lasting, it can no longer just reflect value judgment, but establishes a social identity. It then means that over time, labels rewrite or redefine the social identities of a people. The various militia groups in the Niger Delta define themselves as those fighting for the right of the people of the region. They see themselves as “freedom fighters”, an identity which the Nigerian newspapers have tended to suppress in their reportage. The labeling of the activities of the JTF as “operation restore hope”, has positively characterized its military expedition, excusing all its attacks on the people as a lawful national assignment, thereby reconstructing the audience’s perception of its role in the Niger Delta. Conversely, the insurgents are labeled “militants”, “hoodlums”, “criminals”, “miscreants”, “cultist” “gangs” while some other people in the region are labeled as being “restive” “quarrelsome” and “insatiable”. Ijeoma (2012:30) observes that it is tantamount to labeling, to generalize one crisis in a creek or village in Bayelsa State or Delta State, for instance, to the entire Niger Delta.

The following excerpts illustrate the distorted value judgment of the Nigerian newspapers and government about the identity and intention of the Niger Delta militia groups, arising from the labels given to them: Text 1: Following incessant attacks from the Niger Delta militants on unsuspecting persons... (*Leadership* Tuesday, August 14, 2008 p. 14). Text 4: Gunmen, weekend, attacked men of the

Joint Task Force JTF on the Niger Delta at two separate locations in Delta State (*Vanguard*, Tuesday, June 24, 2008 p.10). Text 11: About ten suspected militants and cultists were arrested yesterday when men of the Joint Task Force in Rivers State combed Abonnema Warf/Njemanze parts of the state capital in its bid to rid the area of miscreants and brigands (*Vanguard*, Friday, July 4, 2008 p. 10). Text 13: A soldier, two militants and a civilian have been confirmed dead in a gun fight between the military Joint Task Force (JTF) and suspected militants in Abonema (*Daily Trust*, Thursday, July 31, 2008 p. 8). Text 14: Meanwhile, fear has gripped residents of Bayelsa East senatorial district, bothering Rivers and Bayelsa States over possible military action in the area, following the Sunday attack by militants (*Vanguard*, Tuesday February 5, 2008 p. 6). Text 43: Commander of the JTF, a.k.a. Operation Restore Hope, Brigadier-General Nanven Rintip, says the military is on the trail of a large cache of arms, including General Purpose Machine Guns (GPMGs), AK 47, moved to some parts of Warri and Effurun by some criminals to disturb the peace in Delta State (*Vanguard*, Tuesday, March 18, 2008 p. 10). Text 44: The militants, who were chasing a supply vessel when they ran into a team of JTF on waters, were the first to open fire (*Leadership*, Tuesday, August 14, 2008 p. 14).

As can be seen from the excerpts, the insurgents are referred to as “criminals”, “gunmen”, “militants”, “miscreants”, “cultist” and “brigands”. It appears however that the insurgents are referred to as “criminals”, “miscreants”, “brigands” etc. because of their illegitimate means of armed resistance. Nevertheless, in the perception of the audience, the “criminal” notion as constructed by the newspapers, tend to relegate to the background, the essence of the resistance of the “criminals”. Thus, the audience, whose perception of the “militants/criminals” is molded by the press, very often, sees nothing wrong with the ways and means adopted by the “operation restore hope”

and government in dealing with them. This study, in line with Chilwa (2011), argues that the Nigerian media tend to have largely influenced the audience in having negative perception about the Niger Delta. The insurgents who are labeled as “cultists”, “brigands” and “hoodlums”, are seen as a lawless and irresponsible group, who are not worthy of prosecuting a just cause which they claim to be undertaking. The Nigerian newspapers having represented the JTF positively and constructed the militia groups negatively, have consequently tended to have molded the negative perception of the audience about the activities of the insurgents.

#### **4.7 Agency Attribution for Actors in the Niger Delta Crisis**

The function of agency attribution in a text is to reveal who takes certain actions and who receives the benefits, or suffers the consequences of such actions. The application of this discursive strategy gives legitimacy to the militarist ideology of the insurgents and the illegal killing of the militants or civilians by the JTF. Attempt is made in this section of the analysis to show how the actors and actions are represented in the Niger Delta crisis. In agency attribution generally, foregrounding in texts is placed in prominent position in main clauses. The first segment of this section is the analysis of how the militias (“militants”) are fore-grounded as causal agents in the clauses.

##### **4.7.1 Militants Constructed as Causal Agents**

The following are textual evidences where the insurgents are represented as causal agents of violent actions expressed in the clauses. Their actions are fore-grounded and the JTF and civilians are portrayed as victims. In this context the insurgents are represented as exclusively responsible for initiating attacks on the JTF. Text 1: 15 Corpses Recovered from Bonny Waters (headline). Following incessant attacks from

the Niger Delta militants on unsuspecting persons which has often resulted in gun battle between the Joint Task Force (JTF) and militants in the region on the high sea, ten corpses suspected to be bodies of militants were again recovered from the Bonny Waters on Sunday (*Leadership* Tuesday, August 14, 2008 p. 14). Text 4: Militants attack JTF in bid to recover seized crude (headline). Gunmen, weekend, attacked men of the Joint Task Force JTF on the Niger Delta at two separate locations in Delta State in an audacious bid to recover barges loaded with stolen crude oil that were confiscated with oil bunkerers by the military. The first attack, according to information available...was targeted at the JTF troops that seized four barges at Alogwe Creek, Benin River (*Vanguard*, Tuesday, June 24, 2008 p. 10). Text 6: Oil War: MEND shuns N'Delta Elders. Clark beg. 10 militants feared dead in fresh MEND JTF shootout (headline). The declaration of oil war by the main militant group in the Niger Delta, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), sparked off gun duels between the militants and the Joint Task Force (JTF) on several fronts in the region yesterday, leaving at least 10 suspected militants dead (*Vanguard*, Saturday, September 20, 2008 front page).

In the above excerpts, the agents and their actions in the clauses are fore-grounded, thereby revealing the consequences of such actions, so as to attract sympathy for the JTF and unsuspecting persons. Although the headline of text 1 is silent on the agent's action, "the incessant attacks on the JTF and other persons" expressed in the lead is attributed to the agent. Such attacks have become "incessant" and are not carried on only the Federal Government's military task force but also on "unsuspecting persons" who could be women and children. In text 4 the militants again, attack the JTF. The fact that the attack is targeted at the JTF troops that seized barges of stolen oil, further criminalises the insurgents' attack and evokes

sympathy for the troops. In text 6, it is the declaration of oil war by the “militants” that causes the gun duels between the military task force and themselves. So this battle in which 10 “militants” are killed is caused by insurgents themselves, and of course, the soldiers normally “defend” themselves while the killing of the insurgents in the cause of the soldiers’ self-defence is also justified.

#### **4.7.2 JTF Constructed as Causal Agents**

The JTF are constructed as the causal agents of the violent actions on the “militants” in the texts that follow. Their actions are however, normally excused because they are always represented as being on an important national assignment or reacting in self-defence. Text 1: 15 Corpses Recovered from Bonny Waters (headline). ... Confirming the development, the Army Public Relations Officer, Col. Musa Sagir, said men of the Joint Task Force in the state encountered militants who were on ten speed boats two of which were sunk with the occupants. Our soldiers on ground also recovered four corpses of the militants and four AK 47 riffles. The militants who were chasing a supply vessel were the first to open fire and in the ensuing battle two of their boats were sunk with the occupants (*Leadership*, Tuesday, August 14, 2008 p. 14). Text 13: 4 killed as JTF, militants clash in Rivers (headline). A soldier, two militants and a civilian have been confirmed dead in a gun fight between the military Joint Task Force (JTF) and suspected militants in Abonema, AkukuToru local government are of Rivers State.... Lt Col. Sagir added that the civilian was killed by a stray bullet during the gun fight between the warring militant groups and men of the JTF, who had responded to distress calls from the residents of Abonema about the shootout by the rival gangs. The JTF spokesman said that the sergeant was killed when the patrol van used by the soldiers ran into an ambush by the militants, adding that the van was badly damaged (*Daily Trust*, Thursday, July 31, 2008 p. 8) Text 48:

...According to spokesperson of the military body, Lieutenant Col. Sagir Musa, the militants in eight speed boats had attempted to attack the refinery jetty but were successfully repelled by men of JTF on ground. Sagir said that during an exchange of fire, soldiers sank three of the speed boats belonging to the militants. And he feared that the occupants had died (*Saturday Vanguard*, September 20, 2008 p. 5).

As noted earlier, since the activities of the joint military task force are to be seen as necessary, all the actions taken by them, are excused. The media even give explanations to ameliorate the gravity of such actions even when they are condemnable. In text 1 for instance, the JTF's sinking of two boats with the occupants resulting in the death of ten "militants" can be excused since "the militants who were chasing a supply vessel were the first to open fire". The soldiers are only acting in self defence and so, there is nothing wrong with their killing of the "militants". It is interesting that the ten bodies, brings to fifteen, the number of corpses of "militants" recovered from the river in the last few weeks. In other words, the JTF has in the last few weeks, been killing the insurgents. In text 13, the killing of the two "militants" is in order since the soldiers are responding to "distress calls from the residents". Impliedly, the soldiers are on a rescue mission hence anything they do in the process is justified. Also, sympathy for the JTF is evoked because a soldier dies when "the patrol van used by the soldiers ran into an ambush by the militants". Similarly, in text 48, soldiers have to sink three boats with the occupants because "the militants tried to attack the refinery jetty and were successfully repelled by the men of JTF on ground". Again, the soldiers are constructed as responding to the attack by the insurgents and in the process, "genuinely" sink the boat with the occupants.

The newspapers adopt this discursive strategy in most of their reports in justifying and concealing all the illegal killings of the insurgents by the military task force and the actual number of civilians involved.

#### 4.7.3 Agency Deletion

In the application of this discursive device, the agents in the clauses of the headlines and bodies of reports are deleted through the process of nominalisation and passivization. By so doing, some obvious actions of the JTF are not made explicit. This is to avoid the notion that they are altogether responsible for the killings. The assumption is that in a war situation, for instance, soldiers could mistakenly shoot at the wrong targets. In the following texts, agentless clauses show that responsibilities are not attributed to anyone rather the actions are received by both the JTF and the militias. Text 6: Oil War: MEND shuns N'Delta Elders. Clark begs. 10 militants feared dead in fresh MEND, JTF shootout. Okumagba may be appointed N'Delta minister. Ibori sues for Peace (headline) (*Vanguard* Saturday, September 20, 2008 front page). Text 13: 4 killed as JTF, militants clash in Rivers (headline) (*Daily Trust*, Thursday, July 31, 2008 p. 8). Text 49: Soldier, others die in Rivers rival gangs' crossfire (headline) Three suspected bandits and a soldier were on Tuesday killed in a gun duel between two rival groups in Abonema Akuru Toru local Government Area of Rivers (*The Guardian* Thursday, July 31, 2008 p. 3). In text 6 (i.e. the headline), the death of ten "militants" is not attributed to anyone. The actual agent of the killing is concealed. The circumstance, "the gun duel between the militants and the Joint Task Force (JTF) in the body", implies that those killed are simply victims of the circumstance; neither the JTF nor the "militants" is to blame. In other words, they might even be victims of the insurgents referred to as "militants" as they attack the soldiers, thus, implying that the soldiers (JTF) might have been innocent of the

killings. Similarly, in text 49, the circumstance leading to the death of the “bandits’ and a soldier is “gun duel between two rival groups”. The implication is that the “bandits” are victims of their own action and responsible for the death of the soldier. In other words, the JTF is innocent of all the killings. In text 13 (i.e. the headline), the death of two “militants” is not attributed to anyone neither is that of the civilian. They are victims of circumstance, “a gun fight between the military Joint Task Force (JTF) and suspected militants” as expressed in the body of the story. The agentless clause in this text however indicates that both the joint task force and the militia are victims of the action. It is discernable from the foregoing that representation of actors or victims in news reports is not value free. The writers present view points capable of portraying the subject matter positively or negatively, depending on their inclinations.

Examining further the discursive strategies adopted in the sampled publications, it is discernable that the newspapers make extensive use of nominalisation in projecting the Niger Delta images and by extension their ideological standpoint of the region. Fairclough (2000:26) states that nominalisation involves abstraction from the diversity of processes going on, no specification of who or what is changing, a backgrounding of the processes themselves, and a foregrounding of the their effect. . According to Fairclough (2003:13), “one common consequence of nominalisation is that the agents of processes, people who initiate processes or act upon other people or objects, are absent from text.” Therefore, in nominalised sentences, the subject is removed from the text, and in some cases attention is focused on the object rather than the subject who initiated or committed the act.



Most of the texts analysed subjectify the images of the region, leaving no reader in doubt as to who is speaking and with what tone or emphasis, as illustrated by the following excerpts:

Text 50: A coalition of the Niger Delta militants under the umbrella of Joint Revolutionary Council (JRC) has submitted a 10-point demand to the Niger Delta Technical Committee (*Saturday Vanguard*, October 18, 2008 p.10).

Text 51: Movement for Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) yesterday told the Minister of State for Niger Delta, Elder Godsdan Orubebe, who has requested for a visit to some of its field commanders in the creeks that he is jeopardizing his life by embarking on such trip...(Vanguard, Thursday, December 30, 2008 p. 10).

Text 52: Gunmen suspected to be assassins on Thursday night invaded the official residence of the Deputy Speaker of the Rivers State House of Assembly, Charles Befi (*The Guardian*, Saturday, 19 2008 p. 3).

Text 53: The kidnappers who abducted Mrs Patricia Asita, wife of a federal lawmaker in Port Harcourt last Sunday, have demanded N50 million ransom before her release (*Daily Trust*, Tuesday, April 18 p. 2).

Text 54: Three suspected kidnappers were rounded up yesterday by the Rivers State Joint Task Force at Ogbakiri in Emohua local government Area ... (*Vanguard*, Thursday, February 28, 2008 p. 10).

Text 55: An eight-man armed robbery gang yesterday succeeded in raiding a new generation bank at Issele-Uku in Delta State, carting away a huge amount of money from the strong room (*Vanguard*, Tuesday, June 18, 2008 p. 10).

Text 56: About 10 suspected cultists were arrested yesterday when men of the Task Force in Rivers State combed Abonema Warf/Njemanze parts of the state capital, in its bid to rid the area of miscreants and brigands (*Vanguard*, Friday, July 4, 2008 p. 10).

Text 57: The lingering Niger Delta conflict came to the fore in the early 1990s as a result of mistrust, suspicion and disagreement between the foreign oil companies and the host oil bearing community...(The Guardian, Saturday, September 20, 2008 p. 8).

As can be seen from the illustrations, A coalition of the Niger Delta militants; The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND); Gunmen suspected to be assassins; The kidnappers; Three suspected kidnappers; An eight-man armed

robbery gang; About 10 suspected cultists; and The lingering Niger Delta conflicts which are the subjects of the respective texts are some of the expressions constantly used by the newspapers in creating the images of the Niger Delta. By subjectifying (foregrounding) these images in the texts, the newspapers leave no one in doubt about where their emphases are. None of the excerpts objectifies the images with the use of passivization. Conversely, objectifying (backgrounding) the Niger Delta images would entail the texts reading thus:

Text 58: A 10-point demand has been submitted to the Niger Delta Technical Committee by a coalition of the Niger Delta militants under the umbrella of Joint Revolutionary Council (JRC).

Text 59: The Minister of State for Niger Delta, Elder Godsdan Orubebe, who has requested for a visit to some of its field commanders in the creeks, was yesterday told by the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) that he is jeopardizing his life by embarking on such trip...

Text 60: The official residence of the Deputy Speaker of the Rivers State House of Assembly, Charles Befi, was on Thursday night invaded by gunmen suspected to be assassins.

Text 61: A N50 million ransom for the release of Mrs Patricia Asita, wife of a federal lawmaker has been demanded by the kidnappers who abducted her in Port Harcourt last Sunday.

Text 62: The Rivers State Joint Task Force, at Ogbakiri in Emohua local government Area yesterday, rounded up three suspected kidnappers...

Text 63: A new generation bank at Issele-Uku in Delta State was yesterday successfully raided by an eight-man armed robbery gang who carted away a huge amount of money from the strong room.

Text 64: Men of the Task Force in Rivers State, in its bid to rid Abonema Warf/Njemanze parts of the state capital of miscreants and brigands, yesterday combed the area when about 10 suspected cultists were arrested.

Text 65: As a result of mistrust, suspicion and disagreement between the foreign oil companies and the host oil bearing communities the lingering Niger Delta conflict came to the fore in the early 1990s....

An important point to note here is Kress' (1990: 71) view that language can never appear by itself, but as the representative of a system of linguistic terms, which

themselves reflect the prevailing discursive and ideological systems. The implication of the discursive practices employed in constructing the texts analysed, is that no news report is ideologically neutral, transparent or “innocent”. The foregoing shows how newspapers promote a particular ideological position through the manipulation of language.

#### **4.8 Discussion of the Findings of Critical Discourse Analysis**

Through the foregoing analysis, it has been revealed that there are hidden ideological standpoints underlying the Nigerian newspapers’ representation of the Niger Delta. The newspapers display their sympathy for the activities of the Joint Military Task Force (JTF) irrespective of the obvious killing of the insurgents and civilians. This sympathy is a reflection of some negative assumptions about the Niger Delta largely influenced by the newspapers. In representation of the Niger Delta, the Nigerian newspapers draw and add to stereotypes of the region. As argued by Chiluba (2011:203), the priority of the Nigerian newspapers at a point, becomes the security situation in the region in terms of violence and kidnapping, ignoring perhaps the most vital issue of lack of underdevelopment and environmental degradation. Unfortunately, to an average Nigerian, the Niger Delta thus becomes synonymous with violence, kidnapping, vandalism, agitation and restiveness.

It has been pointed out that one positive way of representing the JTF in the Niger Delta crisis is the exaggeration of the armed protests in the region as “war”. The insurgents are constructed as a stable military formation at war with the state, necessitating the massive deployment of soldiers to the area to engage them in the “war”. The Nigerian newspapers constantly portray the activities of the militias as mere criminalities of some hapless gun trotters and kidnappers, thereby justifying the

brutal activities of the JTF, seeing its role as imperative. Applying labeling as a rhetorical device, the newspapers portray the insurgents negatively using such words as “militants”, “gunmen”, “kidnappers”, “miscreants” “criminals” “bandits” and “cultists”. Conversely, the JTF are constantly referred to as “Operation Restore Hope” and seen as national heroes. Furthermore, the newspapers employ agency attribution in representing the activities of the soldiers as necessary. While positive actions are attributed to the soldiers who are constructed as being on a rescue mission, acting in self-defence and being victims, the “militants” are always portrayed as the aggressors.

The environmental problems in the region which are consequences of oil exploitation often result in mild protests by the people. Such protests against this ecological degradation and government’s insensitivity to it, is constructed as “restiveness” “unnecessary agitation” and “vandalism” by the “irate” people. The people’s views against some government’s stands on issues concerning the area are constructed as outright opposition to such plans, aimed at developing the region. Furthermore, the publications analysed, largely make use of nominalisation (foregrounding) in creating negative images about the Niger Delta. The texts analysed also reveal that that Nigerian newspapers adopt very similar language of representation in reporting on the Niger Delta, irrespective of where they are based. The implication of this is that unlike other similar studies (see Yusha’u, 2010 and Ijeomah, 2012), Nigerian newspapers do not display ethnic biases in their reportage of the Niger Delta region, considering the uniformity in their use of language of representation.

The questions remain why the reports are couched in a particular language of presentation. Language is no longer seen as merely reflecting reality about the

world, but as central to creating reality. Espousing the centrality of language in creating reality, Allan (1998:127) has this to say:

The language of news can never be ideologically “neutral”. Rather each word of the news accounts for a “two-sided-act” in that it is continuously *oriented towards an addressee*, that is, it is conditioned by *whose* word it is and *for whom* it is meant. The meaning of a word can never be affixed once and for all, as it is actively negotiated through the reciprocal relationship between addresser and addressee.

This study argues that in the framing the reports on the Niger Delta, the possibility of journalists exploiting the loophole in Rear’s (2002) *telling elements* in constructing news is quite high. The foregoing reports on the Niger Delta cannot be said to be free from the writers’ value judgments, use of imagination, and fictional devices. Taiwo (2005:218) lends credence to this argument when he states: “the initiation, advancement and sustenance of discourse by newspapers are not often devoid of some embellishments, determined by their own angle of the story”. Overall, what has emerged in the Nigerian print media about the Niger Delta is the representation of a region that is bedeviled with many problems, in tandem with the dominant ideologies of the region in Nigeria as a society. It is the use of these stereotypes that is worrisome, although Fowler (1991:17) argues that underlying Galtung and Ruge’s news values concept are the basic elements of stereotypes. His view brings to the fore, the fact that what becomes news and news values are actually a reciprocal dialectical process in which stereotypes are the currency of negotiation. Therefore, the occurrence of striking events reinforces stereotypes and in reciprocity, the firmer the stereotype, the more likely are relevant events to become news.

#### 4.9 Visual Text Analysis

In the visual text component of newspaper representation of the Niger Delta, is also the presence of the created “reality” of an area that is bedeviled by militancy, for

instance. Within news discourses, photographs offer “true image” of the world, authenticate stories as well as increase the validity or believability of such stories (Barthes 1972, 1977; Hall, 1981). By representing the ideological dimensions of news messages and offering themselves as literal visual transcriptions of the “real” world, it is possible that news photos sustain the ideology of unbiased and objective journalism. Nigerian newspapers employ this device in reporting on the Niger Delta as exemplified by the photograph which accompanies the story on page 18 of *Sunday Vanguard* of July 13, 2008 headlined “Royal fathers behind kidnapping in N-Delta uncovered”. A similar photograph is used in the story with the headline, “Militants present 10-point demand to N-Delta Committee” (Saturday, *Vanguard*, October 18, 2008 p. 12).

# STORY OF THE WEEK



MEND militants...care about good name?

## 'Royal father' behind kidnapping in N-Delta uncovered!

EMMA AMAIZE

THE story of certain persons in the Niger-Delta sponsoring ransom-demanding kidnappings and sea landings as a business, thereby denying the credibility of the Niger-Delta struggle, has always faded like make-believe until, last month, when the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger-Delta (MEND) clamped down on a self-styled royal father who allegedly aids a gang of kidnapers/sea routes in Bayelsa State.

The self-appointed royal father, so believed to be a juju priest, is said to have held Bilabiri Kingdom in Ibeju Local Government Area of Bayelsa State by the jocular since 2003, when he allegedly killed the younger sister of his mother, whom he accused of witchcraft, but his alleged reign of infamy did not fully blossom until June, 2006 when he is said to have invaded the community with armed youths, threatening to shoot to death anybody that challenged his supremacy, including the bona fide additional ruler, King Dodo II, 'Irestra E. Ogoni, the Pere of Ibeju Kingdom, who relocated to

Yenagoa, the state capital.

Four is the beginning of wisdom in the community and, at the last count, no fewer than 500 persons have fled the kingdom as a result of his threat to their lives. He operated a militant camp at the periphery of the community and since security agents started hunting for him, he has been hiding in his den in the creek, where it is difficult to track him down. He and his boys, who are ferociously loyal to him, rob ocean-going fishing trawlers on the high seas and take hostages for money. One of his escapades was the kidnapping in June, 2006 of about eight expatriates working for the Peak Petroleum. After the abduction, he contacted officials of the state government as usual for ransom and went to Yenagoa to carry out the negotiation on behalf of the gang.

Retreat to the creek

The cat was, however, let out of the bag before money could be released to him and he bolted away. He retreated to the creek and has not been sighted in Government House, Yenagoa since then.

King Dodo II, in a letter, dated July 18, 2007 to the commander of the JTF, David Ejor Barnicks, Effurun, Delta State, entitled, "SOS

call to rescue the people of Bilabiri Kingdom" said, "I hereby send this SOS message, which has long been overdue, to you being the CDR (Commander) of the JMTF that has been doing good work in the Niger Delta Region by safe-guarding our people. There is this armed group, headed by one Paul (surname withheld), that has been terrorizing the whole kingdom, state and the country in general by kidnapping foreign oil workers for ransom and sea piracy. "He is presently having two expatriates in his custody, kidnapped by him from Calabar, Cross River State. He and his gang are parading the whole of the entire kingdom with guns, shooting sporadically in the air and throwing dynamites into the river. In short, the entire kingdom is in total jeopardy. He has ordered that no one should go out or come in to Bilabiri, hence I am sending this SOS message in order to save the souls of my people.... Your quick response will save the situation."

Help did not come because of the peculiar Niger-Delta terrain. Two months later, September 17, 2007 to be precise, the monarch wrote the commanding officer of the Yenagoa Military Base and the State Security Service (SSS) again. The second

letter entitled, "Save Our Souls from Paul (surname withheld) And His Gang's Heinous Activities" read: "Juju priest, Paul, and his gang of sea pirates and kidnapers of oil workers for ransom in Bilabiri Kingdom, Ekemrense LGA of Bayelsa State, he is the one that kidnapped eight expatriates that work with Peak Petroleum/Equator Exploration on June 8, 2006, and also kidnapped two expatriates from Calabar, Cross River State. He is the brain behind most of the kidnapping and sea piracy in Bayelsa State and outside the state.

"He always sends his boys with arms on sea piracy on daily basis, attacking trawlers, oil installations. Recently, some of the boys he sent returned with bullet wounds. The two with bullet wounds are one City Saka and Victor Zikoru who are now hiding in Warri I, therefore, make this caution call on your Command to get them arrested and let them face the wrath of the law and be sent to jail so as to give peace to this area, the state and the country in general for we are in total danger."

The juju priest continued with his illegal business without moderation despite the fact that his activities had been reported to security agents until June when his cup got full. The MEND, which had been agitated by complaints of criminal activities in the Pennington River area, received reports that a gang of sea pirates and kidnapers, led by the self-styled royal father, was behind the exploits. Specifically, a company based in Lagos had its two fishing trawlers attacked by the sea pirates who carted away materials and money. The MEND sent out its fighters to confront the sea pirates. Vanguard reported exclusively on July 1, 2008 how the MEND confiscated the

seven suspected sea pirates were kept under custody in one of the MEND camps in the Niger-Delta after they were captured and four of them reportedly confessed that it was the "royal father" that is their godfather.

Commander of the Joint Task Force (JTF) on the Niger-Delta, Brigadier-General Naueva Rindip, confirmed to Sunday Vanguard when contacted at the time of the incident that some militants in the Niger-Delta clashed somewhere in Bayelsa State over some undisclosed matters and the leader of one of the groups was allegedly "kidnapped" by the other group. But a MEND commander who admitted that the suspected sea pirates were actually being held by the militant group said the "royal father" was on the run. "Yes, we sent out our fighters to confront the sea pirates when we got information that

**He is presently having two expatriates in his custody, kidnapped by him from Calabar, Cross River State**

the boys were robbing fishing trawlers, they would attack them, extort money from them, sometimes, they disconnect trawlers and carry the whole thing away. You see all these things they are doing are spoiling the struggle and people think that it is the MEND that is doing it," he said.

"Our information is that a man who claims to be a royal father is the one that is bankrolling them and we went there to confront them after we got report of what was happening, that was after they just robbed a trawler belonging to a company in Lagos.

Some of the sea pirates had run away before we got there, but we got some people, among the seven with us, four of them are believed to be

Continues on page 16







The device is used to “impose meaning at a stroke”. The photograph of a set of masked “militants” armed to the teeth, is used in the stories to signify how deadly (denotative meaning of the photo) those in the picture are. Barthes (1977: 16) refers to this as “denoted message” or “literal reality” and notes that the image is not the reality itself. He further suggests that to impose a second meaning (the connotative meaning) on the photo the production of the photograph needs to be considered:

For the press photograph which apparently is not imitation but suggests reality, connotation cannot readily be grasped at the level of the message. It can however be already inferred from certain phenomenon which occur at the level of production... On the one hand, the press photograph is an object that has been worked on, chosen, composed, constructed, treated according to professional aesthetic or ideological norms which are so many factors of connotation.

A critical examination of the photograph, using Barthes’ suggested production of it (choice, technical treatment, framing, layout) or Nixon’s (1997) code of casting as analytical framework, could reveal that there is somewhat manipulation in the use of the photographs of the masked men. The “militants” appear so orderly arranged to face the camera. It suggests that they are very much aware of their being photographed. It is obvious that they were not just “out there” but “assembled” and positioned to achieve some effects.

Similar photographs are used in other reports such as “Niger Delta militants won’t disband” (Sunday, Vanguard, November 23, 2008 p. 15) and “The Oil War” (*The Guardian*, Saturday September 20).

#### **4.10 Textual Thrust**

Critical evaluation of the reports on the Niger Delta reveals a great deal of detailed treatment of issues by the sampled publications. Most of the write-ups especially features, opinions and editorials have analytic and interpretative depth, bringing to

the fore, the ideologies lying behind their construction. This is evidenced in a report on page 9 of Saturday *Vanguard*, September 20, 2008 headlined “Oil War: No end in sight”. The story which spills over to the next page has the following riders: “We ‘ll not listen this time around...” says MEND, “Clark begs, wants Okah released”, “Nigeria’s oil export falls, loses 600,000 bpd” “Okumagba may be appointed N’Delta minister”. Even a cursory look at this headline and the riders shows that the piece delves into various aspects of the current issues bothering on the region. The opening paragraph reads thus:

Rebuffed by Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the region’s elders led by the Ijaw leader, Chief Edwin Clark are begging for peace. Minister of Special Duties (Presidency), Elder Godsdan Orubebe swore that the Yar’Adua government meant well for the Niger Delta. And in order not to miss the target, Chief Clark and other Niger Delta elders have spread their tentacles since Tuesday night , calling some of the militant leaders on phone and appealing to them to hold fire and give the Federal Government a chance to execute its agenda for the region with the new Ministry. The octogenarian had confirmed to newsmen at his country home, Kiagbodo in Delta State the next day, Tuesday, September 16, that he had very useful interaction with some of the MEND leaders and was proceeding to Abuja afterwards to meet with President Yar’Adua on the way forward.

In its front page lead, *The Guardian*, Tuesday, June 3, 2008 carried a news item with the headline: “Niger Delta crisis is real danger, says Eso”. The over 1000-worded report gives details of what transpired at the sitting of the Rivers State Truth and Reconciliation Commission chaired by an eminent jurist, Justice Kayode Eso. The story opens with the following paragraph:

Eminent jurist, Justice Kayode Eso, yesterday placed on the front burner the lingering crisis in the Niger Delta and its implications for national stability. Eso who is the chairman of the Rivers State Truth and Reconciliation Commission, warned that any attempt to pay lip service to the conflict by the various stakeholders, could spell doom for the country.

There are many other examples of write-ups on the Niger Delta in the newspapers analyzed to illustrate the in-depth treatment of issues bothering on the region. The following are the headlines of some of the reports (see appendix ix):

- “Niger Delta: Our Agenda For The Summit” (*The Guardian*, Sunday, July 13, 2008 front page),
- “Militants Challenge Yar’Adua: Two things will end your nightmare” (*Vanguard*, Sunday October 12, 2008 front page),
- “We are poised to re-write the history of Niger Delta – Akpabio (*Daily Trust*, Tuesday, April 8, 2008 p. 49),
- OIL WAR; MEND shuns N’Delta Elders, (*Vanguard*, Saturday, September 20, 2008 front page),
- “Goodbye Bakassi” (*Vanguard*, Thursday, August 14, 2008 front page),  
“Goodbye Bakassi” (*Daily Trust*, Thursday, August 14, 2008 front page),
- “Bakassi Peninsula...going...” (*The Guardian*, Thursday, August 14, 2008 p. 8),
- Security Beefed Up As Bakassi Goes To Cameroon (*Leadership*, Thursday, August 14, 2008 front page),
- “Niger Deltans are parasites too” (*Leadership*, Tuesday, August 12, 200, p. 18),
- “Niger Delta: Time to act” (*Daily Trust*, May 22, 2008) ,
- “Why Nigeria will criminalize oil theft in N-Delta – Maduekwe” (*Vanguard*, Saturday, October 18, 2008 p. 4),
- “I have a win-win formula for the Niger Delta – Idika Kalu (*Vanguard*, Wednesday, September 10, 2008 p. 42),
- Elite Not Responsible For Niger Delta Militancy – Graham Douglas (*Leadership*, Sunday, January 13, 2008 p. 20),
- Niger Delta Ministry, a waste of resources – Shehu Sani (*Daily Trust*, Saturday September 20, 2008 p. 53).

#### 4.11 **Headline Evaluation**

Newspaper headlines basically grade the news, sell it, summarize it and help draw readers' attention to it. They particularly reveal the social, cultural and national representations circulating in a society at any given time. Taiwo (2005) observes:

Newspaper headlines are a rich source of information about the field of cultural reference and they can be sometimes difficult to understand especially when the reader cannot recognize the field, allusions, issues and cultural references necessary to decode the content. The reader must understand enough about what has been going on recently in the setting of the news i.e. the reality that is assumed to be widespread in the society at that particular time.

Expectedly, all the items in the sampled publications have headlines, since headlines act as forerunners to news reports. The types of headlines identified in the newspapers sampled for the study include: plain headlines, speech headlines, headlines with pointers (riders), question headlines, alarm-raising headlines and label headlines.

**Plain Headline (Straight Headline):** This expresses a single idea or more and is couched in a simple statement often using distinct and short words. This type of headline dominates the reports published by the newspapers used for the study. For example: Police nab kidnappers, others in A/Ibom (*Daily Trust*, Friday, July 4, 2008 p. 9). Bayelsa SSG's wife narrates ordeal with kidnappers (*Daily Trust*, August 12, 2008 p. 2). MEND threatens war (*The Guardian*, Tuesday, December 30, 2008 p. 4). Militants meet over Okah (*Vanguard*, Friday, March 7, 2008 p. 11). JTF Nabs Oil Thieves (*Leadership*, Sunday, July 13, 2008 front page).

**Speech Headline:** This type of headline uses either direct or reported speech of the news source whose name is placed after such a speech. The following are some examples: "I watched as snipers killed six kidnappers" - Bayelsa SSG's wife (*Vanguard*, Tuesday, August 12, 2008 p. 10). "Why we struck on Sunday" - MEND

(*Vanguard*, Tuesday, February 5, 2008 p. 6). “Niger Delta gives me nightmares” - Yar’Adua (*Sunday Vanguard*, October 5, 2008 front page). “Why Niger Delta Summit must hold” - FG (*Daily Trust*, Friday, July 4, 2008 front page). “Political loses of Niger Delta crisis unquantifiable” - Comrade Onjeh (*Weekly Trust*, Saturday November 1, 2008 p.51).

**Quotation Headline:** In this type of headline, quotation marks are used to show that a word is being used outside its normal meaning. Examples include: The “Oil War” (*The Guardian* Saturday, September 20, 2008 p. 9) “Niger Delta Issue requires Global attention” (*The Guardian*, Sunday, November 9 2008 p. 29). “We need to talk over Niger Delta issues” (*The Guardian*, Wednesday, July 16, 2008 p.17). “Niger Delta crisis not threat to tourism in Nigeria” (*Sunday Vanguard*, July 13, 2008 p. 20). “The Niger Delta Needs Fund-raising Summit” (*The Guardian*, Sunday, October 5, 2008 p. 6).

**Question Headline:** Also known as curiosity headline, are headlines couched in form of questions meant to arouse the readers’ emotion about the issue addressed, for instance: The Niger Delta: Crisis or Opportunity? (*The Guardian*, Sunday, July 13, 2008 p.27). French hostages in Bakassi: Who negotiates with militants? (*Vanguard*, Thursday, November 13, 2008 p. 47).

**Alarm-raising Headline:** This type of headline uses one or more words to create in the reader, the awareness of the context in which the comments that follow are being made. This type of headline normally has two parts: the given information and the comments that follow. Such headlines are: Lulu-Briggs: Kidnappers demand N200m ransom (*Vanguard*, Friday, February 8, 2008 front page). Obong’s Stool: New Obong May Face Committal Proceedings (*Leadership*, Monday, may 12, 2008 p. 28).

**Label Headline:** This type of headline which is more or less an identification device

used in designating particular write-ups or news stories, performs a labeling function as the name implies. The following are examples of label headlines identified in the texts published by the newspapers: As South South Gathers....(*Vanguard*, Wednesday, August 6, 2008). Reform Plan For Niger Delta (*The Guardian*, Sunday, January 13, 2008 p.55). The Niger Delta conflict (*The Guardian*, Monday, July 21, 2008 p. 79). Illegal Refineries (*Vanguard*, Tuesday, September 23, 2008).

Table 2, shows the types of headlines employed by the newspapers in signposting their reports.

**Table 2: Types of Headlines**

<b>Type</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
Plain	1064	75.08
Quotation	7	0.49
Speech	167	11.78
Labe	28	1.97
Question	2	0.14
Alarm-Raising	146	10.30
Others	3	0.21
<b>Total</b>	<b>1417</b>	<b>100</b>

As shown in the table, plain headlines dominate the Nigerian newspaper space, accounting for 1064 (75%) of the headlines of the sampled publications. Plain headlines are conventional and equally short. This justifies why editors have preference for them. Its conciseness satisfies the editors' constrain for space. This is followed by speech headlines which constitutes 11.78%. The use of the speech headlines is very significant since news is woven around personalities whose speech matter to the press. Sometimes these speeches are used to arouse the reader's emotion towards a particular issue. There are 146 (10.3%) alarm-raising headlines

while label headlines account for 28 (1.97%) of the total headlines published by the newspapers sampled for the study. As can be seen, there are only 7 quotation headlines, amounting to 0.49% and 3 headlines categorized as “others” as well as 2 (0.14%) question headlines.

In casting headlines on stories published about Niger Delta, Nigerian newspapers assume readers’ knowledge of certain fields of cultural reference and presupposed elements. There are preponderance of the use of words and acronyms like oil, war, crisis, militants, JTF, MEND, MOSOP, etc in the reports. For instance, it takes someone who is abreast with the happenings in the region to decode the message in the headline:

Oil War:

**MEND shuns N’Delta Elders.**

Clark begs.

10 militants feared dead in fresh MEND, JTF shootout.

Okumagba may be appointed N’Delta minister.

Ibori sues for Peace (Guardian, Saturday, September 20, 2008 p.9). This headline presupposes that the reader is aware of the armed confrontation between a combined government troops made up of the army, navy and air force called Joint Military Task Force (JTF) and some groups of armed youths in the Niger Delta. The headline expects the reader to be aware that one of such militia is called Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND). The headline presupposes that the reader is aware that the armed youths are also referred to as “militants”. The reader is also presumed to have known that the reason for the armed confrontation is the issue of who should control the oil resources in the Niger Delta which the armed

youths claim belongs to them. This also implies that to decode the headline: “JTF Nabs Oil Thieves” (*Leadership*, Sunday, July 13, 2008 front page), the reader needs to know what JTF signifies and its connection with those referred to as oil thieves.

#### **4.12 Analysis of Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

As can be seen from the foregoing content and critical discourse analytical approaches, there is high level of visibility of the Niger Delta in the Nigerian newspapers while the images of the regions in the newspapers have remained largely negative, bringing to the fore, the country’s dominant ideologies of the region. This study employed a triangulated research design and the essence of engaging in the third approach, focus group discussion, was for the purpose of testing out the researcher’s readings of the published texts through critical discourse analysis, with a view to either corroborating them fully or partially or otherwise. Three separate focus group discussions were held. The session with each group made up of seven participants lasted for over two hours. A huge amount of materials to work with was generated at the end of the exercise. Only excerpts from the transcripts that illustrate the thrust of the study were used as all the materials generated could not be possibly used. It is imperative to point out that the use to which the materials were put could not have been the best or the only one. The used materials were examined in a way that would enable the researcher to establish a link between what had emerged as findings from the content and critical discuss analyses and what the focus groups said. As the group discussion progressed, it was found out that few of the participants had traveled to the Niger Delta while the vast majority had not. For most of them, therefore, all they knew about the Niger Delta emanated mainly from the mass media- print and electronic- as can be seen in the discussions:



**Ejike:** What is your understanding of the term “Niger Delta”?

**Christian.** By the Nigerian context, it refers to the oil producing area of the country, which is mostly riverine.

**Stanley:** The Niger Delta refers to the nine states that produce oil in this country. The area is neglected and impoverished. It is like the goose that lays the golden egg but is never fed well (Owerri, November 5, 2011).

**Akaya:** My understanding of the term “Niger Delta” is that it is the part of the country where you have the deposit of crude oil. It is the oil-rich area of the country. The Niger Delta is an important area to the country because it produces the wealth of the nation.

**Isiaka:** Niger Delta is the part of the country where we have mineral oil resources. Economically, the place is very significant to the country and even the whole world because other parts of the world buy oil from us (Owerri, November 19, 2011).

**Amfani:** The Niger Delta, to the best of my knowledge is like the Middle Belt. It is a geo-political area made up of some states. The area also produces oil which is the main source of wealth of the nation.

**Muktar:** I know that the term “Niger Delta” refers to the nine oil producing states of the federation. The area is economically important to Nigeria because that is where we have the country’s oil deposit (Abuja, May 4, 2013)

**Ejike:** How did you get to know about this?

**Christian:** Through the media of course (others, agreeing with him).

**Stanley:** If you travel to the areas you will see it. (Owerri, November 5, 2011)

**Akaya:** We get the news from the mass media like newspapers, TV and so on (others concurring). Even some people who went to the place have seen how the place is (Owerri, November 19, 2011).

**Amfani:** I get to know about the happenings in the place through the media which carry news about the area. The press told the whole world about what is happening in the Niger Delta. I have also been to Port Harcourt because my brother works in the NNPC (Abuja, May 4, 2013).

From the above discussion, it is clear that much of what the audience knows about the Niger Delta come from the media. This is recognition of the potency of the media in creating reality and sustaining ideology. All the participants appeared to be aware of the way the Niger Delta region are generally represented/perceived within the Nigerian culture and beyond. Some responses were however based on the participants’ direct observation. Nevertheless, it was clear from the discussions that though experience sometimes may challenge pervasive dominant ideologies, it does not necessarily prevail (Kitzingner, 1999:117). Such doubt over the “reality” of media messages was vividly expressed thus:

**Attan:** Everywhere you go people talk about the area based on what they read in the press. The media should be blamed for some of these things they write because they can as well talk about other issues like community life, culture and so on. Not crime, crime every time.

**Toju:** But be that as it may, you know, the issue is that most of the write-ups are negative and some of these reports are exaggerated sometimes. It is like journalists emphasize crises in the Niger Delta. I think they deliberately do this to sell their papers. (Owerri, November 5, 2011).

**Akaya:** But I have friends from the area who say that these things happened, but not always. Apart from newspaper reports, I think it is a place worth staying in (Owerri, November 19, 2011)

**Amfani:** When I visited Port Harcourt, before I could drive to any place with my brother, we got to be sure before we move; just to be sure if there is shooting anywhere. But the place is not always like that (Abuja, May 4, 2013).

The participants' general cynicism about media contents notwithstanding, it was established through the discussions that, as kitzinger (1999:117) observed, in practice, media messages are still accepted at least in some areas of their thinking. Kitzingar cited in Omenugha (2005:13) advises that "it is important to note that cultural representations and media coverage of issues are not homogeneous". People may consume different messages and they may also challenge one representation by drawing on another. Even while challenging some media representations, the participants could not but fall back to others as they continuously draw from them, regarding the messages as "reality" as can be deduced from the following discussion. They chorused their views on the level of attention the Nigerian newspapers give to the region:

**Ejike:** How visible is the Niger Delta in the Nigerian Media?

**Christian:** I am convinced that the Niger Delta is quite visible in the Nigerian print media. This visibility is explained by the series of actions government has taken on the area, like the creation of various bodies saddled with the responsibility of developing the place. The Nigerian print media have given the place so much attention that a particular newspaper even chooses its name as *Niger Delta Standard*.

**Victor:** The people should thank the media for projecting them. All the attention government gives to the region is as a result of the projection the media give to the area. The media give the area more attention than they give to other parts of the country. Mention Nigeria at the international scene and the area that comes to mind is the Niger Delta.

**Toju:** The stories are quite visible even in the internet. I would say that comparatively, it is like the Niger Delta has received adequate coverage from the Nigeria media. On plain term, I can say that the papers have done well (Owerri, November 5, 2011).

**Akaya:** I can say that the place is adequately covered in the newspapers. Tv cover them also and radio. Before now a lot of attention is in the area but now you can see that it is more on Boko Haram.

**Isiaka:** To me, newspapers cover the Niger Delta adequately. We get a lot in the newspapers because of their information. *Daily Trust* is just as good as *The Nation*, both cover everywhere in the country. I believe that newspapers cover the place very well. But now, most of the stories now are about Boko Haram. It is the in-thing now.

**Elijah:** Newspapers actually cover Niger Delta well, maybe because people from the place are working in the newspapers more. I don't know whether they do that because of the oil in the place. I think attention should be given to other parts of the country too. (Owerri, November 19, 2011).

**Amfani:** As I said Nigerian newspapers carry news about the area. I think the media write a lot about the people of the area, how the people want government to develop the area because they are suffering.

**Danladi:** From the papers I read, I think the press has given them enough coverage. I can say that the press has actually projected the Niger Delta to the outside world more that it has done to any other section of the country (Abuja, May 4, 2013)

This general agreement by the participants on the level of attention the Nigerian newspapers give to the Niger Delta is a legitimisation of the researcher's finding through the content analytical approach, that there is high visibility of the region in the Nigerian press.

Although the level of visibility of the Niger Delta in the Nigerian newspapers is high, the participants seemed quite convinced that majority of the reports are negative. The discussants seemed to share similar interpretations of the images of the Niger Delta in the media. They expressed their feelings in strong terms about the media representation of the region:

**Ejike:** What kinds of stories do newspapers often carry about the Niger Delta?

**Christian:** The stories about the area reflect all that I have said earlier. Everything about the Niger Delta is in the negative. Even a good story by Governor Rotimi Amechi for instance, will always be written in such a way that it appears negative in the long run. You find out that most of the stories focus

on negative things. If not kidnapping, it is oil bunkering or anything in that family.

**Stanley:** I am attracted to headlines such as “Youths vandalize oil pipelines”, “Militants clash with JTF again in Port Harcourt”, “FG grants amnesty to Niger Delta militants” and so on. Most of the stories emanating from the area are like that. The kinds of stories and the news photos about the Niger Delta are on terror, disintegration and warfare. In short, they are more of negative stories.

**Attan:** Stories about the Niger Delta are peculiar. There is no week or day that you do not have stories centred on crime, oil and gas as well as conflicts between companies and host communities. You read stories about government palliative measures, neglect, marginalization and suffering. The people there are highly volatile. To be on the conservative side, about 70 per cent of the stories emanating from the area are negative.

**Victor:** Stories you come across about the Niger Delta are terrifying. They are mostly stories about a people who feel grossly marginalized and bad that a lot of wealth comes from their area and nothing happens there. You have stories about terrible health conditions. All put together, you have more of negative stories on the Niger Delta; stories on oil spills, aggression and the like. (Owerri, November 5, 2011)

**Akaya:** When you read about the Niger Delta, the stories that you see most are stories on violence, kidnapping and how they demand ransom. Other reports are those that talk about the marginalization of the people of the area. You often see these pictures of militant carrying guns and wearing masks.

**Isiaka:** There are often stories on environment, cultism and other crisis. Another is stories on the ways their leaders mismanage their resources meant for development. I also read mostly about agitation by the people; the way they do to oil companies in their area, kidnapping, killings and so on. There is a lot of disagreement there because of the kind of money you see there. You don't have any other interesting stories about the place.

**Akaazua:** Stories you see about the Niger Delta are stories on political tussles. The people are canvassing for positions by all means. Sometimes I read sports but most of the time, it is dominant cases of kidnapping stories, rapes, violence and fighting.

**Audu:** Most of the stories focus on militancy, kidnapping, pipelines vandalism, petitions and communal clashes. It is always about bad stories (Owerri, November 19, 2011).

**Isah:** When you pick any newspaper, the kind of stories you always read about the Niger Delta are those on oil exploitation and militancy. Kidnapping also make headlines and crises involving youths and their elders at times.

**Zainab:** Stories about youths' restiveness, militants and kidnapping are what you normally read about the Niger Delta and such stories are so disturbing. These things are terrible. See what is happening in Baga and other parts of the northern states now.

**Danladi:** When you read newspapers you always see negative reports written about the area. You read stories about militants fighting with soldiers and how the youths abduct oil workers or politicians or even their relatives (Abuja, May, 4, 2013).

It is to be noted that just as Bell (1999) and Taiwo (2005) have observed, even when the audience believe what they read about the Niger Delta they still express some reservations, suggesting their suspicion of the possibility of embellishments in the news:

**Christian:** Even a good story by Governor Rotimi Amechi, for instance, will always be written in such a way that it appears negative in the long run.

**Toju:** It is like journalists emphasize crises in the Niger Delta. I think they deliberately do this to sell their papers. (Owerri, November 5, 2011).

**Akaya:** Apart from newspaper reports, I think it is a place worth staying in (Owerri, November 19, 2011).

**Amfani:** But the place is not always like that.

**Isah:** I don't think everybody there is as bad as the press write. (Abuja, May 4, 2013).

The created negative “reality” of the Niger Delta through the framing of reports, is affirmed by participants’ responses to a question on the depicted images of the region by the newspapers thus:

**Ejike:** What image of the Niger Delta do you have from what you read in newspapers?

**Christian:** The media portray the Niger Delta as a place where militants operate, a place abandoned by government, a place where oil is produced, a place of poverty and a place where people live in shanties. Yet if you go there, you will still see that there are some beautiful places in the area.

**Stanley:** The images created by the media reports are very horrible and negative.

**Attan:** Obviously the image of Niger Delta is that of deprived people, people subjected to a hell of hardship, an undeveloped area, difficult terrain, polluted environment and violence-prone area. It has a picture of very restive people, people just sitting idle and waiting for oil companies and government to do everything for them.

**Victor:** The press has actually misrepresented the Niger Delta. Based on newspaper reports, the picture any newspaper reader has in his head is that of a rejected, dejected and abandoned people (Owerri, November 5, 2011).

**Akaya:** I have not been to the Niger Delta before, but the stories I read about the place are scaring. They portray there as a place you can't walk freely on

the street; a place you can't sleep with your two eyes closed, because you might be kidnapped.

**Isiaka:** The newspaper image of the people is that they are always disagreeing because government doesn't meet up with their demands.

**Akaazua:** My perception of the place based on what I read, is that though the people have oil, yet they are suffering. The Ogonis, for instance, have no source of drinking water because of pollution. Another is that the people want to control their resources and that is why they vandalize pipelines.

**Audu:** The image of the Niger Delta is that of a "no-go area". The people are painted as being hostile, violent, difficult to control, non-tolerant and uneducated. On the whole, the region is portrayed in bad light.

**Danzaria:** Stories that emanate from the Niger Delta are mostly negative. My perception of the place is that there is no peace in the area (November 19, 2011).

**Amfani:** Honestly, most stories about the place still bounce back to oil. The image is bad; it is like there is a war raging in the place. There is serious fighting in the riverine areas.

**Isah:** The issue is that most of the write-ups are negative. As you can see from the stories you gave us to read, they are mostly negative. The image of the Niger Delta is bad because the people are violent and always agitating

**Zainab:** The Niger Delta is portrayed in so much bad light and that has actually affected the area. People dreaded going there some years back because of that. The place seems to be controlled by militants and kidnappers.

**Danladi:** It can be said that the newspapers actually made Niger Delta to look like a place where people cannot live. The place is synonymous with violence due to the stories they publish (Abuja, May 4, 2013).

It is interesting to observe that as participants negotiate and re-negotiate media messages on the Niger Delta, they also give other "readings" to some of the images as expressed in the following dialogue:

**Ejike:** What do you make out of these struggles and agitations by the people of the Niger Delta?

**Christian:** To me, their struggle is worthwhile. This is a people whose land produces the wealth of the nation yet, they have nothing to show for it. I think they are asserting their right.

**Stanley:** The people's agitation is justifiable. Their environment has been ruined but government has failed to give them the required attention.

**Attan:** The people I can say are asserting themselves. They are demanding for their rights.

**Victor:** I feel the people are right in what they are doing. Government has neglected them and in Nigeria if you don't fight for your right nobody will do it for you.

**Toju:** The action of the Niger Delta youths is to a large extent, justifiable. Government doesn't bother about their welfare and the oil companies are not interested in their affairs and that is why they resorted to arm struggle (Owerri, November 5, 2011).

**Akaazua:** I think the people want to control their resources and that is why they vandalize pipelines.

**Audu:** I think they must be peaceful but they go into violence because government does not give them what they want. They try to defend their right. I don't look at them as bad people.

**Danzaria:** The people are just asserting their right, that's how I see it. They are marginalized and want empowerment (Owerri, November 19, 2011).

**Amfani:** Ordinarily we may see them as aggressive. ... They are fighting a good course; some parts of the area are irritating because of the environment.. You wonder how they survive; we are all human beings.

**Isah:** This struggle was caused by something. Government abandoned the environment for so long. This country has produced oil for over 50 years now everybody is suffering.

**Zainab:** Everything about their struggle or restiveness bothers on the fact that they feel abandoned by government, yet the nation's wealth comes from the place. If government can develop the area there will be less trouble there.

**Danladi:** As I said before, the people are complaining of their neglect and are asking for compensation .

As can be seen from the responses of the two groups of discussants from the north (interviewed in Owerri, on November 19, 2011 and Abuja on May 4, 2013), there was no difference in their responses to all the questions posed to them during the sessions. For instance, when asked how they felt about the struggles and agitations by the people of the Niger Delta, they gave their answers in very similar expressions thus:

**Akaazua:** I think the people want to control their resources and that is why they vandalize pipelines.

**Audu:** I think they must be peaceful but they go into violence because government does not give them what they want. They try to defend their right. I don't look at them as bad people.

**Danzaria:** The people are just asserting their right, that's how I see it. They are marginalized and want empowerment (Owerri, November 19, 2011).

**Amfani:** Ordinarily we may see them as aggressive. ... They are fighting a good course; some parts of the area are irritating because of the environment.. You wonder how they survive; we are all human beings.

**Isah:** This struggle was caused by something. Government abandoned the environment for so long. This country has produced oil for over 50 years now everybody is suffering.

**Zainab:** Everything about their struggle or restiveness bothers on the fact that they feel abandoned by government, yet the nation's wealth come from the place. If government can develop the area there will be less trouble there.

**Danladi:** As I said before, the people are complaining of their neglect and are asking for compensation (Abuja, May 4, 2013).

From such views expressed by the two groups which also tallied with those representing the south, it was clear that the residential locations of the groups from the north did not have any colouration on their perception/interpretations of media messages from the Niger Delta. The position of this study on this is that, perhaps, it was because one of the groups representing the north (i.e. NYSC members) had not stayed more than three months in Owerri at the time of the discussion.

#### **4.13 Comparative Analysis of Findings/Discussion of Research Questions**

This study adopted a triangulated research design comprising Content Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis and Focus Group Discussion. As stated earlier, triangulation guarantees confidence about results because it minimizes the inadequacies of a single-method research. In triangulation, the flaw(s) of one method is the strength(s) of another. Denzin (1989:244) states that by combining procedures/techniques, the researcher can utilize the strength of each while overcoming their unique deficiencies. According to Weyers, Strydom & Huisamen (2011: 210), triangulation ensures comprehensiveness and completeness of the research, enhances ability to confirm trends, identifies inconsistencies and improves the reliability and validity of findings. In this section attempt is made to compare the findings of the three methods of investigation adopted, with a view to bringing out the unanimity or differences/variants therein. The section seeks to assess the extent of the presence of patriotism or bias in the Nigeria newspapers' reports on the Niger Delta. Ultimately, this section evaluates whether the findings of the study have been able to answer the research questions.



#### 4.13.1 Unanimity on Visibility of the Niger Delta in Nigerian newspapers

Through the content analytical procedures, the region's visibility in Nigerian newspapers was investigated in respect of topics covered, positioning/placement of the reports published, as well as length/depth of the write-ups. Evaluation of the topics covered showed that the Niger Delta featured prominently in reports on infrastructure, health, education, crime, environment, living, business, recreation and politics. In terms of coverage focus, this is a good spread. Out of the 6274 published items on the country comprising six political zones, 1417 (22.58%) was devoted to the Niger Delta (see table 1). This extent of coverage which is quite significant shows high level of visibility. Concerning positioning of the write-ups, the fact that 841 (79.8%) of reports on the Niger Delta were short and straight news and 1265 (89.3%) of the published items were tucked in the inside pages does not negate the high visibility of the region in the newspapers. This is because it is a standard practice in the print media to have bulk of the news contents in the inside pages as against the front page that most often introduces such stories.

This high visibility of the region in the country's newspapers was also corroborated by the audience. During the discussions held with the focus groups, members gave responses that supported the result of the content analysis such as: "the Nigerian print media have given the place so much attention that a particular newspaper even chose its name as *Niger Delta Standard*," "I am convinced that the Niger Delta is quite visible in the Nigerian print media," "the people should thank the media for projecting them," "all the attention government gives to the region is as a result of the projection the media give to the area," "mention Nigeria at the international scene and the area that comes to mind is the Niger Delta" (Owerri, November 5, 2011). Other similar comments include: "I think the media write a lot about the people of the

area and how the people want government to develop the area because they are suffering,” “I can say that the press has actually projected the Niger Delta to the outside world more that it has done to any other section of the country,” (Abuja, May 4, 2013). From this, it can be seen that research question 1: “how visible is the Niger Delta region in the Nigerian newspapers?” has been clearly answered.

#### **4.13.2 Unanimity on Directional Focus of Reports on the Niger Delta**

There is glaring evidence of unanimity in the results arrived at through the three methods adopted, in terms of the directional focus of the Nigerian newspapers’ reports on the Niger Delta. The content analysis revealed that a larger number of published items 852 (60.1%) portrayed the region in unfavourable terms (see figure 4). Stories on crimes such as killings, kidnapping, robbery and other negative ones including vandalism and violent protests were found to have dominated in the publications.

In the same vein, the critical discourse analysis of the published items revealed three prevalent themes that constantly formed the central focus of the reports: violence/war, kidnapping/abduction and insatiability/restiveness/agitation/vandalism. In constructing the Niger Delta as a violent and war-ravaged area, the newspapers had reports with headlines such as: “Oil War: “MEND Shuns N’Delta Elders, 10 fear dead in MEND, JTF shootout...” (*Vanguard* Saturday, September 20, 2008 front page); 15 corpses recovered from bonny waters” (*Leadership* Tuesday, August 14, 2008 p. 14); “Militants attack JTF in bid to recover seized crude” (*Vanguard*, Tuesday, June 24, 2008 p. 10); “4 killed as JTF, Militants clash in Rivers” (*Daily Trust*, Thursday, July 31, 2008 p. 8). This image of war-torn region was amplified in the bodies of the story where labels and expressions like “militants,” “gunmen,” “gun

battle,” “attack,” “ceasefire,” “invasion” etc were freely used (see texts 1-14). In representing the region as an area dominated by kidnappers, the newspapers were also awash with headlines such as: “Gunmen kidnap two toddlers in Rivers” (*The Guardian*, Monday, July 21, 2008 p. 8); “Bayelsa SSG’s wife narrates ordeal with kidnappers” (*Daily Trust*, Tuesday, August 12, 2008, p. 2); “Armed thugs abduct female magistrate in Warri” (*Vanguard*, Friday, September 26, 2008 p. 10). This image of criminality equally ran through the bodies of the stories, leaving the audience with the impression that the act of kidnapping was the only business of the youths of the Niger Delta region (see texts 15-23). The complaint by the Niger Delta people against the ecological degradation of the region and government’s insensitivity to it was constructed as “insatiability”, “restiveness” and “unnecessary agitation” on the part of the people who also vandalised public property and engaged in endless communal clashes. This theme was clearly shown in headlines such as: “Clark gives conditions for talks with FG” (*Sunday Vanguard* of July 13, 2008, p. 10); “Group Expresses Lack of Confidence In NDDC” (*Leadership* Sunday, December 30, 2008 p. 7); “Ogulagha youths chase Agip workers from flow stations...” (*Vanguard*, Friday, March 7, 2008 p. 10) and amplified in the bodies of the stories (see texts 24-39).

In affirming the negativity in the Nigerian print media output on the Niger Delta, one of the members of the audience stated: “everything about the Niger Delta is in the negative; if not kidnapping, it is oil bunkering... Another said: “there is no week or day that you do not have stories centred on crime, oil and gas as well as conflicts between companies and host communities” (Owerri, November 5, 2011). “You read stories about militants fighting with soldiers and how the youths abduct oil workers or politicians or even their relatives,” was yet another contribution from a participant

during the discussion held in Abuja on May 4, 2013. One discussant also remarked: “there are often stories on environment, cultism ... stories on the ways their leaders mismanage their resources... (Owerri, November 19, 2011). It has equally been shown through the foregoing analysis that research question 2 which sought to ascertain whether Nigerian newspapers construct the Niger Delta positively or negatively has been answered. As stated earlier, the three methods of investigation were unanimous in their findings on this. This priority for oddity is however supported by Braham’ (1982) view that the media privilege the negative in the news.

Flowing from the directional focus of the stories as shown through the content and critical discourse analyses of the publications, are the interpretations of the images of the region by the audience. Research question 3 was designed to find out the dominant images of the Niger Delta in the Nigerian newspapers. The finding was that the hegemonic images of the Niger Delta in the newspapers are those of a crisis-torn, heavily militarised and underdeveloped area, inhabited by a restive, violent and criminally-minded people who feel grossly marginalized. A member of the focus group succinctly put it this way: “based on what I read, is like though the people have oil, but yet they are suffering”. Another said: “my perception of the place is that there is no peace in the area.” One participant also noted: “the images created by the media reports are very horrible and negative while one of them commented thus: “the picture any reader has in his head is that of a rejected, dejected and abandoned people (Owerri, November 5, 2011). One other member remarked: “it is like there is a war raging in the place; there is serious fighting in the riverine areas” (Abuja, May 4, 2013)

#### 4.13.3 Difference/Variant

Negative stories dominated the Nigerian newspapers' reportage of the Niger Delta region, as shown by the various methods of investigation. The content analysis as well as the critical discourse analysis revealed preponderance of stories on crimes such as killings, kidnapping, robbery and other negative ones, including vandalism and violent protests. The focus group equally confirmed this in their responses on the kinds of reports they mostly found in newspapers about the Niger Delta. According to Louw (2001) cited in Omenugha (2011:31), members of the audience have been recognized as co-producers of meanings and as De Certeau (1998) and Hall (1999a) also cited in Omenugha (2011:31), they are often involved in acts of negotiation and re-negotiation of media messages. In line with these views question 4 of this study sought to find other "readings" which the audience gives to the images of the region as created by the newspapers. It found out that the "readings" of the newspapers' representation provided by the focus group equally suggest the region as crisis-torn, heavily militarized and underdeveloped area inhabited by restive and people that are marginalized.

However, it is interesting that even though the audience believed what they read, they expressed some reservations as shown in these expressions: "it is like journalists emphasize crises in the Niger Delta; I think they deliberately do this to sell their papers." (Owerri, November 5, 2011), "but the place is not always like that. I don't think everybody there is as bad as the press write." (Abuja, May 4, 2013). It is equally interesting that as participants negotiated and re-negotiated media messages on the Niger Delta, they also gave other "readings" to some of the images. The focus group sees "restiveness" as genuine *agitation* for and *assertion* of rights as reflected in the following expressions: "to me, their struggle is worthwhile;

this is a people whose land produces the wealth of the nation yet, they have nothing to show for it”, “the people’s agitation is justifiable; their environment has been ruined”, “I feel the people are right in what they are doing; in Nigeria if you don’t fight for your right nobody will do it for you” (Owerri, November 5, 2011), “I think the people want to control their resources and that is why they vandalise pipelines,” “the people are just asserting their right, that’s how I see it; they are marginalized and want empowerment” (Owerri, November 19, 2011), “they are fighting a good course; some parts of the area are irritating because of the environment...” (Abuja, May 4, 2013).

#### 4.13.4 Similarity in Language of Presentation

The study through research question 5 sought to find out the extent to which ethnic/regional biases are evident in Nigerian newspapers’ reports on the Niger Delta. This informed the selection of the newspapers for the study in line with the north/south political divides of the country, with *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* representing newspapers based in the north and *The Guardian* and *Vanguard*, representing those published in the south. Through the CDA it was revealed that the newspapers did not exhibit ethnicity/regionalism in constructing the Niger Delta, considering the similarity in their use of language as exemplified by the following headlines: “Why Niger Delta summit of stakeholders is essential by FG” (*Vanguard*, Friday, July 4, 2008 p. 12), “Why Niger Delta Summit must hold – FG” (*Daily Trust*, Friday, July 4, 2008, front page), “Goodbye Bakassi” (*Vanguard*, Thursday, August 14, 2008 front page), “Goodbye Bakassi” (*Daily Trust*, Thursday, August 14, 2008 front page), “Militants attack JTF in bid to recover seized crude” (*Vanguard* of Tuesday, June 24, 2008 p. 10) and “4 killed as JTF, militants clash in Rivers” (*Daily Trust* of Thursday, July 31, 2008 p. 8). Other headlines showing similarities in

language of presentation by the two groups of newspapers are: “I watched as snipers killed six kidnappers” (*Vanguard*, Tuesday, August 12, 2008 p. 10), “Bayelsa SSG’s wife narrates ordeal with kidnappers” (*Daily Trust*, Tuesday, August 12, 2008, p. 2), “Gunmen kidnap two toddlers in Rivers” (*The Guardian*, Friday, April 11, 2008), “Calabar monarch tussle takes new turn” (*Vanguard*, Tuesday, April 8, 2008 p. 10) and “Obong’s stool: new Obong may face committal proceedings” (*Leadership* Monday, May 12, 2008).

The CDA of the texts equally showed the prevalence of three themes – violence/war; kidnapping/abduction and insatiability/restiveness/agitation/vandalism – in the reports of the two categories of publications on the region. Texts 4 and 6 illustrate violence/war theme in southern-based newspapers while texts 1 and 13 exemplify the theme in the northern-based newspapers. In the same vein, texts 19 and 22 are examples where the southern-based newspapers portray the kidnapping/abduction theme. This theme is inherent in the reports carried in the northern-based publications as shown in texts 20 and 21. Also, the theme of insatiability/restiveness/agitation/vandalism running through the reports in the southern-based newspapers are exemplified by texts 25, 34 and 36 while texts 27, 35 and 37 illustrate same in the northern-based newspapers.

Analysis further revealed that the two categories of newspapers adopted the same discursive strategies in representing the region. Texts 43 and 45 are samples of news reports of southern-based publications that characterise JTF, the government’s military outfit, within the ideological framework that excuses its brutality on the people. The excerpts are quotes showing the voices of government and military officials, which in a way represent the position of the newspapers themselves. Texts

44 and 47 equally show such characterization of the JTF as “operation restore hope” by the northern-based newspapers. With the use of labeling, the two categories of publications show their distorted value judgment and that of government about the identity and intention of the Niger Delta militia groups. Texts 4, 11 and 43 exemplify the use of this rhetorical device by the southern-based newspapers while texts 1, 14 and 44 do same for newspapers based in the north. In these publications the insurgents were referred to as “criminals”, “gunmen”, “militants”, “miscreants”, “cultist” “gangs” and “brigands”. The two groups of newspapers also employed agency attribution for actors in the Niger Delta crisis. While texts 4 and 6 show the southern newspapers constructing the insurgents as causal agents, the northern-based publications also construct the insurgents as causal agents as shown in text 15. In the same vein, text 48 illustrates the construction of the JTF as causal agent by southern-based publications while text 1 and 13 illustrate same by newspapers based in the north. Finally, while text 49 is an example of the use of agency deletion by newspapers based in the south in constructing the Niger Delta, text 13 also exemplifies the use of this strategy by the northern-based newspapers in representing the region.

This finding is surprising and challenges previous findings of similar studies. For instance, Yusha’u (2010) found out that the Nigerian press has ethnic undertones in their reportage on Federal Government’s attack on Niger Delta militant camps and quelling of Boko Haram religious crisis in northern Nigeria. Also, Ijeomah (2012) found out that there were ethno-political biases in Nigerian newspapers’ reporting of hostage taking in the Niger Delta. She asserts that while papers based in the south adopted “support framing”, those in the north adopted “distance framing” in reporting the incidents. But the finding of this study is in the contrary, considering the



similarities in the language structure of the sampled newspapers in reporting the region.

#### **4.13.5 Patriotism/Support**

The implication of this obvious similarity in the use of language of presentation is that the two categories of newspapers exhibited support for government and patriotism in their reportage on the Niger Delta. As stated earlier, characterization of the Niger Delta crisis in terms of a guerilla war is outright exaggeration, and such characterization only tends to justify the military intervention and the killing of the “militants” who have “taken over” the place. Also the representation of the region with main focus on the activities of a few individuals who engage in kidnapping and abduction of others is ideological. The spate of the crime in the area as constructed is very alarming and requires a very drastic measure to curtail and such drastic measure is the Federal Government’s massive deployment of troops to the region. The newspapers showed support for government and constructed the JTF positively as “operation restore hope,” in line with the “we” positive construction, and “them” i.e. militants/kidnappers negative representation. Furthermore, the newspapers’ representation of the Niger Delta people as insatiable, quarrelsome and restive suggests justification for government’s frequent excuses that such restiveness and lack of peace were responsible for the delay in developing the region. The newspapers adopted the “support framing” in favour of government in constructing the Niger Delta, and this can be seen as patriotism. It is evident that the newspapers were united in propagating government’s ideology in reporting the Niger Delta crisis. The crisis was considered a threat to the country’s economy since it affected the exploitation of oil resources, the main foreign exchange earner for the country. This representation of the region is in line with government’s ideology. The newspapers

showed patriotism by constructing the region in a manner that justifies government's policies and actions on the Niger Delta.

Perhaps, the reason for this exhibition of patriotism by the two categories of newspapers can be explained by Taiwo (2005:244)'s view that when an issue bothers on national interest, all newspapers remain united in the manner they represent it. He found out that Nigerian newspapers were united in their condemnation of the World Court's judgment that ceded Bakassi, an oil-rich part of the country to Cameroun. Taiwo (2005:224) states: "at such times there is no divergent ideological postures reflected in headlines. All newspapers sing the same tunes because the interest of the nation is being undermined." This study argues that the Nigerian newspapers consider the Niger Delta crisis an issue of national interest, and that is why the discursive strategies they adopt in representing the region as well as the themes emanating from them are similar. For instance the militia groups are constructed as a standing army that has declared "war' against the nation, a situation capable of breaking up the country, if not checked by the state with a full-scale military confrontation. Therefore, research question 6 which was posed to unmask the ideologies underlying Nigerian newspapers' construction of the Niger Delta has been clearly answered.

#### **4.14 Test of Hypotheses**

The chi-square test was designed to establish the homogeneity of proportions of the published items in terms of their weighing on the Niger Delta in respect of topics covered, positioning/placement, directional focus, length as well as sources of the published items. The aim was firstly to empirically confirm the level of visibility of the Niger Delta in the Nigerian newspapers as sought by research question one.

Secondly, the test was to ascertain whether the level and quality of coverage were independent of the newspapers or otherwise i.e. whether some newspapers covered specific topics more than the others. To this end, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- 1      H0: Topics covered on the Niger Delta are independent of the newspapers.  
         H1: Topics covered on Niger Delta are not independent of the newspapers.
- 2      H0: Positioning of published items on Niger Delta is independent of  
         newspapers.  
         H1: Positioning of published items on Niger Delta is not independent of  
         newspapers.
- 3      H0: Directional focus of published items on Niger Delta is independent of  
         newspapers.  
         H1: Directional focus of published items on Niger Delta is not independent of  
         newspapers.
- 4      H0: Length of published items on Niger Delta is independent of newspapers.  
         H1: Length of published items on Niger Delta is not independent of  
         newspapers.
- 5      H0: Sources of published items on Niger Delta are independent of  
         newspapers.  
         H1: Sources of published items on Niger Delta are not independent of  
         newspapers.

P-value was used to determine when to accept or reject the null hypothesis in comparison with the alpha-value chosen. Test static is given by:

$$\chi^2_{cal} = \sum_{ij} \frac{(O_{ij} - E_{ij})^2}{E_{ij}} \sim \chi^2_{(r-1)(c-1)}$$

Where  $E_{ij} = \frac{R_i \times C_j}{N}$

where N is the total number of observations

where r = no of rows

and c = no of columns

The degree of freedom (df for this test is given by (r-1) (c-1). For example, if we have 10 rows and 4 columns on a contingency table, then the df is given by (10-1) (4-1) = 9 x3 = 27

- (i)  $O_{ij}$  is the observed frequency in the  $i$ th topic covered and  $j$ th newspaper, e.g.  $O_{11}$  = observed frequency in the topic (infrastructure) and The Guardian newspaper.
- (ii) Also,  $E_{ij}$  is the expected frequency in the  $i$ th topic covered and  $j$ th newspaper.
- (iii)  $R_i$  is the  $i$ th row total, e.g.  $R_i$  = the marginal observed total frequency for Infrastructure topic i.e. 337
- (iv)  $C_j$  is the  $j$ th column total e.g.  $C_1$  = the marginal observed total frequency for the Guardian newspaper i.e. 109
- (v)  $N$  is the overall or grand total e.g. 1417

### Level of significance

The level of significance for the test is 5%

### Decision Rule

Decision rule is to reject  $H_0$  if p-value is less than 0.025 and accept it if otherwise.

### Test of Extent of Coverage by Newspapers (Test of Independence of Topics Covered by Newspapers)

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	88.871 <sup>a</sup>	27	.000
Likelihood Ratio	84.214	27	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.418	1	.036
N of Valid Cases	1417		

a. 5 cells (12.5%) have expected count less than 5.  
The minimum expected count is 2.03.

From the above H<sub>0</sub> is rejected since the p-value= .000 < 0.025. With this value it is concluded that the topics covered on the Niger Delta are dependent on newspapers.

### Test of Extent of Coverage in respect of Positioning/Placement in the Newspapers

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	41.347 <sup>a</sup>	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	36.845	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.181	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	1417		

a. 5 cells (31.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .52.

From the above table H<sub>0</sub> stands rejected since the p-value= .000 < 0.025. It is therefore concluded that the positioning/placement of published items on Niger Delta is dependent on newspapers.

### Test of Homogeneity of proportions in Terms of Weighting on Directional Focus in the Newspapers

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	22.716 <sup>a</sup>	6	.001
Likelihood Ratio	21.710	6	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.001	1	.317
N of Valid Cases	1417		

a. 1 cells (8.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.57.

From the above table,  $H_0$  is also rejected since the p-value = .001 < .025. It is therefore concluded that proportions of direction of the published items on the Niger Delta are dependent on newspapers.

### Test of Extent of Coverage in Terms of Length of Published Items in the Newspapers

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.096E2 <sup>a</sup>	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	112.302	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	28.170	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	1417		

a. 1 cells (5.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.53.

From the above table,  $H_0$  stands rejected since the p-value = .000 < .025. The conclusion therefore, is that the length of items published on the Niger Delta is dependent on the newspapers.

### Test of Extent of Coverage in Respect of Sources of Published Items in the Newspapers

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	83.193 <sup>a</sup>	27	.000
Likelihood Ratio	91.862	27	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.497	1	.221
N of Valid Cases	1417		

a. 8 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5.  
The minimum expected count is 1.22.

From the above

table, H0

is rejected since the p-value = .000 < .025. It is therefore concluded that sources of published items on the Niger Delta are dependent on the newspapers.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **5.1 Summary**

Looking at the subject of investigation of this study, there were a good number of revelations made in the course of the study. The revelations emerged through the triangulated research design adopted for the study. The first major finding from the analysis of the manifest content - news, features, opinions and editorials - of the sampled publications, was that the Nigerian newspapers gave high level of attention to the Niger Delta. Out of the 6274 items published on the nation, the Niger Delta accounted for 1417 (22.58%). The newspapers covered a wide range of topics – infrastructure, health, education, crime, environment, living, conflict, business, recreation and politics. This fact was corroborated by the focus group who affirmed that they read a lot about the oil-producing region in the newspapers.

Another finding of this study was that tucking of the bulk of the reports in the inside pages of the newspaper conformed to the standard practice in newspaper publishing. Most often, important stories are introduced on the front page and the rest part finished in the inside pages, as were the case of stories on the Niger Delta.

Emerging from further analysis of the topics covered was the curious revelation that Nigerian newspapers gave priority to negative reports on the Niger Delta, thereby creating predominantly negative images of the region. This major finding was evident in figure 4 which showed that unfavourable reports accounted for 852 (60.1%) of the 1417 items published on the region. As was the view of the focus group, the barrage of negative reports probably made the Federal Government to become more committed than ever, to the resolution of the Niger Delta crisis. This commitment



manifested in April 2009, when the Federal Government granted amnesty to militants operating in the region, in addition to other palliative measures initiated to solve the problems in the region. The resultant effect was the return of comparative peace to the region.

Another finding of this study was that despite government's frequent excuse that the Niger Delta "opposition" to its plans was responsible for the delay in developing the area, government still appeared to have shown concern about issues bothering on Niger Delta. This was shown in the volume of pronouncements made on them. Government was placed first in the ranking of sources of the published items, accounting for 445 (31.4%) of sources of the published items. These frequent government pronouncements could directly be linked to its subsequent actions such as the establishment of a full ministry in charge of the region, as agreed upon by the focus group.

Apart from the findings emerging from the analysis of the manifest content of the publications, the revelations emanating from the critical discourse analysis of the text were quite illuminating. One finding was that the newspapers' framing of the reports on the Niger Delta culminated in the emergence of the hegemonic images of the region as an undeveloped entity under the grip of militants, kidnappers, armed robbers, restive youths, cultist and vandals. The region was also portrayed or represented as one being inhabited by insatiable ever agitating and quarrelsome people. This was indeed a confirmation of the finding through the content analysis, that the region was largely negatively reported.

It is quite revealing that the "readings" of the newspapers' portrayal of the Niger

Delta provided by the focus group, equally suggested the region as crisis-torn, heavily militarized, underdeveloped, and inhabited by restive people. However, the focus group saw the restiveness as agitation for and assertion of rights as illustrated in these their comments: “to me their struggle is worthwhile”, “the people’s agitation is justifiable”, “government doesn’t bother about their welfare”, “these people are highly neglected”, “the level of development in the Niger Delta is not commensurate with the wealth they produce.”

Another finding of the study was that Nigerian newspapers did not exhibit regional and ethnic undertones in their coverage of the Niger Delta, considering the uniformity in their use of language of presentation. The four newspapers (*The Guardian* and *Vanguard* representing the south; and *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* representing the north) employed similar discourses in framing the headlines as well as the bodies of the reports. This finding, challenges the findings of similar studies (see Yusha’u, 2010, Ijeomah, 2012).

One other major finding of this study was that behind Nigerian newspapers’ portrayal of the Niger Delta, were some ideological undertones. The region was constructed as an area where some criminals had declared war on the nation, necessitating federal government’s deployment of troops to the region to quell the rebellion. The people of the region were further constructed as quarrelsome, always agitating and opposing government’s good plans for them, a situation responsible for the delay in the development of the area.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

With specific reference to the research questions for the study and consequent upon the findings that emerged, the following conclusions have been drawn:

- a. There is high visibility of the Niger Delta in the Nigerian newspapers, with the newspapers based in the southern part of the country giving more coverage to the region.
- b. The kinds of stories in the newspapers about the Niger Delta range from reports on economy, education, environment, politics, crimes, conflicts to health and recreation, with reports on crimes and conflicts dominating.
- c. The overall images of the Niger Delta as portrayed by Nigerian newspapers are predominantly negative.
- d. The hegemonic images of Nigerian newspapers' portrayal of the Niger Delta are those of a crisis-torn, heavily militarised and underdeveloped area, inhabited by a restive people who feel grossly marginalized.
- e. The "readings" of newspapers' representation or portrayal of the Niger Delta provided by the focus group, equally suggest the region as crisis-torn, heavily militarised and underdeveloped area, inhabited by restive people.
- f. The focus group, however, sees the restiveness as agitation for and assertion of rights.
- g. Nigerian newspapers do not exhibit regional/ethnic biases in their coverage of the Niger Delta, considering the uniformity in their use of language of presentation.
- h. There are hidden ideological undertones in Nigerian newspapers' construction of the Niger Delta.

It could then be said that findings of this study have provided empirical answers to the question, "how have the Nigerian newspapers covered the Niger Delta?" The Niger Delta is quite visible in Nigerian newspapers, but it has been negatively

portrayed. This however can be explained by the fact that the media have been found to prioritize the negative in the news (see Braham, 1982). In creating the “reality” through the initiation, advancement and sustenance of discourse, the media tend to draw from and add to existing stereotypes.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

From the summary and conclusion of this study, it is evident that the media have a lot to do to ensure positive portrayal or representation of the Niger Delta region. From the findings, there is no doubt that the oil-rich region of Nigeria enjoys high level of visibility in the Nigerian newspapers, but the image portrayed has remained largely negative. In view of this, it is hereby recommended that:

1. Considering the strategic position the Niger Delta occupies in the country’s economy, Nigerian newspapers, especially those based in the northern part of the country should allocate more news space to the area.
2. More importantly, Nigerian newspapers should frame news, features, editorials and other write-ups on the Niger Delta in the discourse that will reverse the negative image of the region. This is critical, in view of government’s current efforts to attract foreign investors to the oil sector of the economy.
3. The media should mount serious campaigns against militancy, kidnapping, oil bunkering, youths’ restiveness, cultism, armed robbery and other vices with which the region has been identified. This they can do by down-playing any resurgence of militancy in the region instead of sensationalizing it.
4. The media should devote more time and space to monitor the amnesty programme embarked upon by government, which is ultimately aimed at rehabilitating the ex-militants and making them become gainfully employed.

5. Nigerian newspapers should equally monitor the funding and performances of all the agencies and establishments saddled with the development of the region such as the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs.

#### **5.4 Suggestion for Further Research**

This study has made some revelations about the Nigerian newspapers' portrayal or representation of the Niger Delta. However, in spite of these revelations of the inquiry, there is need for further research efforts, especially by the electronic media into the area, so as to provide a more comprehensive picture of the entire Nigerian media representation of the Niger Delta.

Finally, it is also suggested that a similar study be carried out on the northern part of the country, where the activities of the Boko Haram religious sect is currently posing a serious security threat.

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## **APPENDIX I**

### **THE KAIAMA DECLARATION**

**by**

***IJAW YOUTHS OF THE NIGER DELTA  
BEING COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE ALL IJAW YOUTHS  
CONFERENCE WHICH HELD IN THE TOWN OF KAIAMA THIS 11TH DAY OF  
DECEMBER 1998.***

#### **INTRODUCTION**

We, Ijaw youths drawn from over five hundred communities from over 40 clans that make up the Ijaw nation and representing 25 representative organisations met, today, in Kaiama to deliberate on the best way to ensure the continuous survival of the indigenous peoples of the Ijaw ethnic nationality of the Niger Delta within the Nigerian state.

After exhaustive deliberations, the Conference observed:

- a.** That it was through British colonisation that the IJAW NATION was forcibly put under the Nigerian State
- b.** That but for the economic interests of the imperialists, the Ijaw ethnic nationality would have evolved as a distinct and separate sovereign nation, enjoying undiluted political, economic, social, and cultural AUTONOMY.
- c.** That the division of the Southern Protectorate into East and West in 1939 by the British marked the beginning of the balkanisation of a hitherto territorially contiguous and culturally homogeneous Ijaw people into political and administrative units, much to our disadvantage. This trend is continuing in the balkanisation of the Ijaws into six states-Ondo, Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers and Akwa Ibom States, mostly as minorities who suffer socio-political, economic, cultural and psychological deprivations.
- d.** That the quality of life of Ijaw people is deteriorating as a result of utter neglect, suppression and marginalisation visited on Ijaws by the alliance of the Nigerian state and transnational oil companies.
- e.** That the political crisis in Nigeria is mainly about the struggle for the control of oil mineral resources which account for over 80% of GDP, 95 %of national budget and 90% of foreign exchange earnings. From which, 65%, 75% and 70% respectively are derived from within the Ijaw nation. Despite these huge contributions, our reward from the Nigerian State remains avoidable deaths resulting from ecological devastation and military repression.
- f.** That the unabating damage done to our fragile natural environment and to the health of our people is due in the main to uncontrolled exploration and exploitation of crude oil and natural gas which has led to numerous oil spillages, uncontrolled gas flaring, the opening up of our forests to loggers, indiscriminate canalisation, flooding,

land subsidence, coastal erosion, earth tremors etc. Oil and gas are exhaustible resources and the complete lack of concern for ecological rehabilitation, in the light of the Oloibiri experience, is a signal of impending doom for the peoples of Ijawland.

**g.** That the degradation of the environment of Ijawland by transnational oil companies and the Nigerian State arise mainly because Ijaw people have been robbed of their natural rights to ownership and control of their land and resources through the instrumentality of undemocratic Nigerian State legislations such as the Land Use Decree of 1978, the Petroleum Decrees of 1969 and 1991, the Lands (Title Vesting etc.) Decree No. 52 of 1993 (Osborne Land Decree), the National Inland Waterways Authority Decree No. 13 of 1997 etc.

**h.** That the principle of Derivation in Revenue Allocation has been consciously and systematically obliterated by successive regimes of the Nigerian state. We note the drastic reduction of the Derivation Principle from 100% (1953), 50% (1960), 45% (1970), 20% (1975) 2% (1982), 1.5% (1984) to 3% (1992 to date), and a rumored 13% in Abacha's 1995 undemocratic and unimplemented Constitution.

**i.** That the violence in Ijawland and other parts of the Niger Delta area, sometimes manifesting in intra and inter ethnic conflicts are sponsored by the State and transnational oil companies to keep the communities of the Niger Delta area divided, weak and distracted from the causes of their problems.

**j.** That the recent revelations of the looting of national treasury by the Abacha junta is only a reflection of an existing and continuing trend of stealing by public office holders in the Nigerian state. We remember the over 12 billion dollars Gulf war windfall, which was looted by Babangida and his cohorts We note that over 70% of the billions of dollars being looted by military rulers and their civilian collaborators is derived from our ecologically devastated Ijawland.

**Based on the foregoing, we, the youths of Ijawland, hereby make the following resolutions to be known as the Kaiama Declaration:**

**1.** All land and natural resources (including mineral resources) within the Ijaw territory belong to Ijaw communities and are the basis of our survival.

**2.** We cease to recognise all undemocratic decrees that rob our peoples/communities of the right to ownership and control of our lives and resources, which were enacted without our participation and consent. These include the Land Use Decree and The Petroleum Decree etc.

**3.** We demand the immediate withdrawal from Ijawland of all military forces of occupation and repression by the Nigerian State. Any oil company that employs the services of the armed forces of the Nigerian State to "protect" its operations will be viewed as an enemy of the Ijaw people. Family members of military personnel stationed in Ijawland should appeal to their people to leave the Ijaw area alone.

**4.** 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 labelled 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

5.. Ijaw youths and Peoples will promote the principle of peaceful coexistence between all Ijaw communities and with our immediate neighbours, despite the provocative and divisive actions of the Nigerian State, transnational oil companies and their contractors. We offer a hand of friendship and comradeship to our neighbors: the Itsekiri, Ilaje, Urhobo, Isoko, Edo, Ibibio, Ogoni, Ekpeye, Ikwerre etc. We affirm our commitment to joint struggle with the other ethnic nationalities in the Niger delta area for self-determination.

6. We express our solidarity with all peoples organisations and ethnic nationalities in Nigeria and elsewhere who are struggling for self-determination and justice. In particular we note the struggle of the Oodua peoples Congress (OPC), the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (Mosop), Egi Women's Movement etc.

7. We extend our hand of solidarity to the Nigerian oil workers (NUPENG and PENGASSAN) and expect that they will see this struggle for freedom as a struggle for humanity

8. We reject the present transition to civil rule programme of the Abubakar regime, as it is not preceded by restructuring of the Nigerian federation. The way forward is a Sovereign National Conference of equally represented ethnic nationalities to discuss the nature of a democratic federation of Nigerian ethnic nationalities. Conference noted the violence and killings that characterized the last local government elections in most parts of the Niger Delta. Conference pointed out that these electoral conflicts are a manifestation of the undemocratic and unjust nature of the military transition programme. Conference affirmed therefore, that the military are incapable of enthroning true democracy in Nigeria.

9 We call on all Ijaws to remain true to their Ijawness and to work for the total liberation of our people. You have no other true home but that which is in Ijawland.

10 We agreed to remain within Nigeria but to demand and work for Self Government and resource control for the Ijaw people. Conference approved that the best way for Nigeria is a federation of ethnic nationalities. The federation should be run on the basis equality and social justice.

Finally, Ijaw youths resolve to set up the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) to coordinate the struggle of Ijaw peoples for self-determination and justice.

Signed for the entire participants by:

**Felix Tuodolo**  
**Ogoriba, Timi Kaiser-Wilhelm.**

## APPENDIX II

### Interview Guide for Focus Group Discussion

#### Conduct of Focus Group Discussion

Let me first of all inform you that the exercise is aimed at getting information from you on how you read and appreciate newspaper reports on the Niger Delta. You may have noticed from the newspaper cuttings earlier given to you to read, that all the marked stories centred on the region. You may have also read similar stories in various newspapers in the past. Everybody is encouraged to participate in this discussion and to feel free to bring up any idea or opinion on any issue raised. There is no wrong or right answer to any question. Only one person is expected to talk at a time and others will take their turns. You are welcome.

1. How often do you read national newspapers?

*Probe for:*

Exposure to national dailies

Frequency

2. Which of the national dailies do you read and what reason(s) inform your choice of newspapers?

*Probe for:*

Interest

Proximity

House style

Accuracy

3. What do you understand by the term “Niger Delta” and how many states of the federation make up the region?

*Probe for:*

Awareness that the Niger Delta refers to the oil bearing part of Nigeria

Awareness that the region is made up of nine states of the federation

Awareness that the region is of great economic significance to Nigeria

4. What kinds of stories about the Niger Delta attract your attention most?

*Probe for stories on:*

Oil exploration and exploitation

Oil spills and other forms of ecological problems

Various forms of violence like militancy, kidnapping, communal clashes etc

Oil theft

Others

5. What is your assessment of extent of newspaper coverage of the Niger Delta?

*Probe for:*

Visibility of Niger Delta in the Nigerian print media

Depth of treatment of issues

Placement of stories

6. What kinds of reports on Niger Delta are mostly found in the dailies?

*Probe for directional focus:*

Preponderance of positive stories

Preponderance of negative stories

Preponderance of neutral stories

7. Let's now compare the extent of coverage of the region by the newspapers you read

*Probe for:*

Audience perception of exhibition of regional/ethnic bias by the newspaper reportage on the region

Audience perception of exhibition of national interest by the newspapers reportage on the region

8. From the newspaper stories you read about the Niger Delta, what do you generally think about the region?

*Probe for:*

Any relationship between the dominant images of the Niger Delta the audience have and the newspaper reportage on the region: is there any perception of militants as criminals; activities of militants as self-assertion; perception of unfair treatment of the region by the rest of Nigeria; perception of the people as insatiable; perception of the people as merely quarrelsome or restive etc.

### APPENDIX III

#### Sample of Transcript of Discussion with Participants from Southern Nigeria

**Ejike:** Let me first welcome you all to this forum. (Explained the purpose of the discussion and allowed participants to introduce themselves).

**Ejike:** How often do you read newspapers?

**Christian:** I read newspapers daily and the newspapers I read include *Thisday*, *Businessday*, *Vanguard* and *The Sun*. I don't read *The Guardian* because it is so elitist. I read these newspapers so as to update myself on national issues. Other newspapers I read depend on what I am looking for.

**Stanley Uzoaro:** I read newspapers everyday but I have no preference for any particular newspaper. The one I read at a particular time depends on the subject matter. However, I like *The Sun* because of the way it projects issues.

**Attan:** I read newspapers on a daily basis. I don't really have preference for a particular newspaper. I read papers based on their headlines and issues written about, that are current. You know, Nigerian national newspapers are versatile in the sense that each of them has a reporter in every state in Nigeria.

**Victor:** As a journalist, I am under compulsion to read newspapers everyday. As a matter of personal interest, I read *New Nigerian* newspaper everyday to see whether the story I sent the previous day was used or not.

**Toju:** I read newspapers everyday. I read *Vanguard* more often, though I read other publications like *The Guardian* and *Punch*. I read newspapers depending on what I am looking for. But I read them generally to update myself with the current issues.

**Ejike:** How do you mean? Something makes you read a particular newspaper at a particular time?

**Christian:** For instance, if I am looking for issues bothering on the South-West of the country, I go for *Tribune* newspaper. But if I want to know more about events in the South-South I normally read *Vanguard* or *Thisday*. For events in the South-East, I read *Champion* or *The Sun*. For issues bothering on the Northern part of the country, I read *New Nigerian* or *Leadership*.

**Stanley:** If I want to read about issues affecting the *Yorubas*, I read *Tribune* while *Leadership* and *Daily Trust* carry more stories from the north. I read more of local papers like *Port Harcourt Telegraph*, *Plain Truth* and the like when I want to read

about issues on the South-South or the Niger Delta. Each of these newspapers has its own focus.

**Attan:** Newspapers like *Vanguard*, *The Guardian*, *Daily Independent*, *Businessday* are owned by people from the Niger Delta. Naturally these newspapers give preference to the area more than other newspapers. So when I want to know more about issues on the Niger Delta, I read these ones, when I want to read more about the West go for *Tribune* or *Punch*.

**Victor:** If I want to know what the *Yoruba* man thinks about Nigeria, I will read *Tribune* newspaper. *Leadership* reports about the north more than *Champion* which focuses more on the east. *Daily Independent*, *Punch* and *Thisday* cover all grounds. My hatred for *The Guardian* is because the management over-uses journalists. *The Guardian* covers the South-South more because of the origin of the owner.

**Toju:** *New Nigerian* and *Daily Trust* focus more on the North while *Champion* and *The Sun* feature the South-East more than other newspapers. In the same vain, *Vanguard*, and *Daily Independent* give more attention to the Niger Delta issues than other newspapers.

**Ejike:** What is your understanding of the term “Niger Delta?”

**Christian:** My understanding of the term “Niger Delta” is that it is traceable to the formation of the region, “Niger Area” by the Anglican Communion. By the Nigerian context, it refers to the oil producing area of the country, which is mostly riverine. There are nine states that make up the region. The area is quite significant to the country because, up to 90% of the country’s wealth comes from the area. Government considers this area very important and that was why it created the OMPADEC (Oil Producing Area Development Commission), NDDC (Niger Delta Development Commission) and Ministry of Niger Delta. Whenever you hear “Niger Delta”, you remember people living in squalor, people whose rights are trampled upon, impoverished people. The word is synonymous with militancy, pressure groups, people who produce enough wealth but cannot get what they ask for.

**Stanley:** The “Niger Delta” refers to the nine states that produce oil in this country. The area is neglected and impoverished. It is like the goose that lays the golden egg but is never fed well. If you ask me, I will say that the place needs more attention.

The people's farmland and water have been destroyed because of oil businesses. Oil companies operating there have some blames too.

**Attan:** The Niger Delta is strategic to Nigeria because it was the entry point of Christianity into Nigeria. The trans- Atlantic slave trade made its mark in the area. Of course it is strategic because it is the treasure base of Nigeria. The Niger Delta has become synonymous with militancy, poverty, neglect, wealth, bickering and upheavals. As a region, it is made up of nine oil producing states in Nigeria. Seven of the states were in the old Eastern Region while one was in the old Mid-Western region and the other was in the Western Region.

**Victor:** Niger Delta is the area covering the states that have something to do with the River Niger. It also has something to do with the oil producing areas in Nigeria.

**Toju:** The Niger Delta, to me, represents the oil producing areas of the South-South. Anytime you mention Niger Delta, oil production comes into your mind. The area is strategic because it produces the wealth of the nation

**Ejike:** How did you get to know about this?

**Christian:** Through the media of course (others, agreeing with him).

**Stanley:** I have worked in Port Harcourt and if you travel to the areas you will see it.

**Ejike:** What kinds of stories or pictures do newspapers often carry about the Niger Delta?

**Christian:** The stories about the area reflect all that I have said earlier. Everything about the Niger Delta is in the negative. Even a good story by Governor Rotimi Amechi for instance, will always be written in such a way that it appears negative in the long run. This is because the journalist will naturally want to give the background of the place so as to make his story strong. He would want to recall. Even when writing about the quantity of oil produced in the Niger Delta, you find the reporter emphasizing the quantity that is stolen. In other words, he may end up talking more of oil bunkering. You find out that most of the stories focus on negative things. If not kidnapping, it is oil bunkering or anything in that family. Not only the stories; even the pictures accompanying the stories are often those of militants.

**Stanley:** I am attracted to headlines such as "Youths vandalize oil pipelines", "Militants clash with JTF again in Port Harcourt", "FG grants amnesty to Niger Delta



militants” and so on. Most of the stories emanating from the area are like that. The kinds of stories and the news photos about the Niger Delta are on terror, disintegration and warfare. In short, they are more of negative stories.

**Attan:** Stories about the Niger Delta are peculiar. There is no week or day that you do not have stories centred on crime, oil and gas as well as conflicts between companies and host communities. You always find stories bothering on clashes between militants and security operatives or among communities themselves. You always see pictures of militants brandishing dangerous weapons. You read stories about government palliative measures, neglect, marginalization and suffering. The people there are highly volatile and stories on cultism and other forms of gangsterism are newspapers’ delight. To be on the conservative side, about 70 per cent of the stories emanating from the area are negative.

**Victor:** Stories you come across about the Niger Delta are terrifying. They are mostly stories about a people who feel grossly marginalized and bad that a lot of wealth comes from their area and nothing happens there. You have stories about terrible health conditions. Stories about the region revolve around these horrible situations. All put together, you have more of negative stories on the Niger Delta; stories on oil spills, aggression and the like.

**Toju:** Controversial stories about the Niger Delta attract me most. I am interested in stories that bother on youths’ agitation and environmental pollution; editorials on developmental issues about the area and articles that proffer solutions to the problems of the region. In short, I read every thought-provoking articles or write-ups about the Niger Delta. Newspaper stories about the Niger Delta are so disturbing and terrifying. The stories you read and the pictures you see about the place on daily basis, are all on kidnapping, oil bunkering, militancy, fighting among communities and what have you. Just very few stories on the Niger Delta are positive. I can say that almost 90 per cent of the stories are negative. Most of the stories focus on militancy, kidnapping, pipelines vandalism, petitions and communal clashes. It is always about bad stories.

**Ejike:** How visible is the Niger Delta in the Nigerian newspapers?

**Christian:** I am convinced that the Niger Delta is quite visible in the Nigerian print media. This visibility is explained by the series of actions government has taken on

the area, like the creation of various bodies, saddled with the responsibility of developing the place. The Nigerian print media have given the place so much attention that a particular newspaper even chooses its name as *Niger Delta Standard*.

**Attan:** The Niger Delta has received appreciable coverage from the print media. Everywhere you go people talk about the area based on what they read in the press. The media should be blamed for some of these things they write because they can as well talk about other issues like community life, culture and so on. Not crime, crime every time.

**Victor:** The Niger Delta has received enough attention from the print media and the people should thank the media for projecting them. All the attention government gives to the region is as a result of the projection the media give to the area. The media give the area more attention than they give to other parts of the country. Mention Nigeria at the international scene and the area that comes to mind is the Niger Delta.

**Toju:** The Niger Delta has received adequate coverage from the Nigerian media, both print and electronic. The stories are quite visible even in the internet. I would say that comparatively, it is like the Niger Delta has received adequate coverage from the Nigeria media. On plain term, I can say that the papers have done well. But be that as it may, you know, the issue is that most of the write-ups are negative and some of these reports are exaggerated sometimes. It is like journalists emphasize crises in the Niger Delta. I think they deliberately do this to sell their papers.

**Ejike:** Do all newspapers give approximately equal attention to the region?

**Christian:** I don't think so. I know that all national newspapers report on the Niger Delta, but some give the area more attention than the others. For example, *Niger Delta Standard*, *Vanguard*, *Thisday* and *The Guardian* focus more on the region than other papers. All these papers owned by people from the South- South, show some bias in covering the area.

**Stanley:** In reporting on the Niger Delta, you find out that there is no way *Leadership* or *Daily Trust* can write more stories than *Vanguard*, *Thisday* or *The Guardian*.

**Attan:** In terms of area of focus, you know that the South-South people dominate the newspaper space of Nigeria. Newspapers like *Vanguard*, *The Guardian*, *Daily*

*Independent, Thisday, Businessday* and a host of others are owned by people from the area. So these newspapers give preference to the Niger Delta more than other newspapers.

**Victor:** *The Guardian* and *Vanguard* cover the South-South more because of the origin of the owner.

**Toju:** The level of coverage given to the area by papers owned by the indigenes and those owned by the non-indigenes are not comparable. Naturally, those papers based in the North do not give as much attention to the place as those based in the South. I would say that comparatively, papers like *Vanguard, The Guardian* and *Thisday* cover the area more than papers like *Leadership, Punch* or *Daily Trust*. *Vanguard, Thisday* and *The Guardian* are owned by the indigenes and probably that is why they focus more attention on the area than others.

**Ejike:** What image of the Niger Delta do you have from what you read in newspapers?

**Christian:** The media portray the Niger Delta as a place where militants operate, a place abandoned by government, a place where oil is produced, a place of poverty and a place where people live in shanties. Yet if you go there, you will still see that there are some beautiful places in the area.

**Stanley:** The Nigerian print media represent the Niger Delta as deprived people, people subjected to hardship and pains. They represent the place as an area where you have crisis always and a volatile place where youths are aggressive in pursuance of anything. The images created by the media reports are very horrible and negative.

**Attan:** Media portrayal of the Niger Delta is that of deprived people, people subjected to a hell of hardship, an undeveloped area, difficult terrain, polluted environment and violence-prone area. It has a picture of very restive people, people just sitting idle and waiting for oil companies and government to do everything for them

**Victor:** The press has actually misrepresented the Niger Delta. Based on newspaper reports, the picture any newspaper reader has in his head is that of a rejected, dejected and abandoned people.

**Toju:** The image of the region as painted by the media is that of a troubled area, a place where you have too much unrest and agitations, too much pollution and all kinds of negative things. When I was in University of Lagos and read about Warri where I hail from, I dreaded stepping my foot into the place because the story was always war, war, war. When I managed to get to Warri, the place was not a war zone as reported. I was in Warri before the crisis, during the crisis and after the crisis. The story was always lopsided. I imagine what people outside Niger Delta would think about the place, going by the media report.

**Ejike:** What do you make out of these struggles and agitations by the people of the Niger Delta?

**Christian:** To me, their struggle is worthwhile. This is a people whose land produces the wealth of the nation yet, they have nothing to show for it. I think they are asserting their right.

**Stanley:** The people's agitation is justifiable. Their environment has been ruined but government has failed to give them the required attention.

**Attan:** Like I said before, the picture painted of the people is that they sit idle and wait for government to do everything for them. But it goes beyond that because, the level of development in the Niger Delta is not commensurate with the wealth they produce. The people I can say are asserting themselves. They are demanding for their rights.

**Victor:** I feel the people are right in what they are doing. Government has neglected them and in Nigeria if you don't fight for your right nobody will do it for you.

**Toju:** The action of the Niger Delta youths is to a large extent, justifiable. Government doesn't bother about their welfare and the oil companies are not interested in their affairs and that is why they resorted to arm struggle.

### **Sample of Transcript of Discussion with Participants from Northern Nigeria**

**Ejike:** Let me first welcome you all to this forum. (Explained the purpose of the discussion and allowed participants to introduce themselves).

**Ejike:** How often do you read newspapers and why?

**Raphael Akanya:**

I read newspapers mostly on a daily basis. I read *The Sun*, *Guardian* and *Daily Trust*. I prefer reading *The Sun*, first, because of the interesting headlines. I read

others afterwards. I read newspapers generally to get information about what happens around me and beyond.

**Adamu Isiaka:**

I read newspapers on a daily basis. I read *Daily Trust*, *Nation* and sometimes *The Guardian*. I read them because they deal with national issues; issues that concern the whole nation. They cover politics, and so many other things.

**Akaazua Elijah:** At least, I read newspapers four times a week. I read *The Sun*, *Nation*, *The Guardian* and *Punch*, depending on what issues they are writing about. Of course I read the dailies to know what is happening around me. I don't read *Leadership* and *Daily Trust* because they don't carry interesting stories.

**Audu Ruth:** I try to read newspapers everyday. I read mostly in the office. I read as many newspapers as I can find to know what is happening. I mainly read *Vanguard*, but at times, I read *Punch* or *The Guardian* or any other. I read *Vanguard* most often because it has more news, in-depth analysis and less advertisement.

**Danzaria Apollos:** I normally read newspapers up to four times every week. *Daily Trust*, *Vanguard* and *Leadership* are my choice of dailies. I read them to get information about the nation.

**Ejike:** How do you mean? Something makes you read a particular newspaper at a particular time?

**Raphael Akaya:** If I am looking for sports stories I will go for Complete Sports, and if I want to read about political issues I read Thisday or Punch. But if I want to read more about the north I read leadership. Leadership carries more stories from the north more than The Nation.

**Adamu Isiaka:** If one wants to read about issues that concern the East, it is advisable to read *Champion* newspaper. *Daily Trust* writes more about the north and I read it whenever I am searching for issues concerning the northern part of the country.

**Akaazua Elijah:** Issues that affect my state, Kaduna, naturally attract me more and that is why I read *New Nigerian* or *Leadership* first. If I want to read about the Niger Delta, I think the best bet is *Vanguard* or any other paper based in that region. The particular paper I read depends on what exactly I 'm looking for.

**Audu Ruth:** Basically, papers like Tribune or Punch cover the west more than any other regions, because they are based in Lagos. It is not that they do not cover other

regions. So, if I want to read about the Niger Delta, I read *The Guardian* or *Vanguard* because they focus more on this area.

**Danzaria Apollos:** When I want to read stories that focus more on the north, I read *New Nigerian* or *Daily Trust*. These papers carry more details about northern states than other papers. This is because they are published in the north. *Vanguard* or *Thisday*, for instance, tend to cover the Niger delta more, so if you want more stories on the Niger Delta you should read these ones.

**Ejike:** What do you understand by the term “Niger Delta”?

**Raphael Akaya:** My understanding of the term “Niger Delta” is that it is the part of the country where you have the deposit of crude oil. It is the oil-rich area of the country. The Niger Delta is an important area to the country because it produces the wealth of the nation.

**Adamu Isiaka:** Niger Delta is the part of the country where we have mineral oil resources. Economically, the place is very significant to the country and even the whole world because other parts of the world buy oil from us.

**Akaazua Elijah:** The Niger Delta to me is the states within the oil-rich zone of the country. The area is important to the country because it produces oil, it also produce leaders. Added to this, the area has commercial cities.

**Audu Ruth:** The Niger Delta refers to states in Nigeria that produce oil, mostly the South-South states. It basically refers to riverine areas. But again each time you hear about the Niger Delta you have the impression of a very difficult terrain where you have disturbances always.

**Danzaria Apollos:** The Niger Delta is the region that produces crude oil and at the same time, a lot of problems like militancy occur there. The area is strategic to the economy of the country because that is where the nation’s wealth comes from.

**Ejike:** How did you get to know about this?

**Raphael Akaya:** We get the news from the mass media- newspapers, TV and so on (others concurring). Even some people who went to the place have seen how the place is.

**Ejike:** What kinds of stories or pictures do newspapers often carry about the Niger Delta?

**Raphael Akaya:** When you read about the Niger Delta, the stories that you see most are stories on violence, kidnapping and how they demand ransom. Other reports are

those that talk about the marginalization of the people of the area. You often see these pictures of militant carrying guns and wearing masks.

**Adamu Isiaka:** The kinds of stories about the Niger Delta are always negative. There are often stories on environment, cultism and other crisis. Another is stories on the ways their leaders mismanage their resources meant for development. I also read mostly about agitation by the people; the way they do to oil companies in their area, kidnapping, killings and so on. Most of the stories published about the area and the pictures also are on violence and crisis. There is a lot of disagreement there because of the kind of money you see there. You don't have any other interesting stories about the place.

**Akaazua Elijah:** Stories you see about the Niger Delta are stories on political tussles. The people are canvassing for positions by all means. Sometimes I read sports but most of the time, it is dominant cases of kidnapping stories, rapes, violence and fighting.

**Audu Ruth:** The stories I always read about Niger Delta are those on oil exploitation and its impacts on the area. Newspapers often carry pictures of oil spills and militants. Most of the stories focus on militancy, kidnapping, pipelines vandalism, petitions and communal clashes. It is always about bad stories.

**Danzaria Apollos:** Stories about the Niger Delta that always make the headlines are those that bother on militancy, youths' empowerment, kidnapping. These were rampant in the past but not as much now.

**Ejike:** How visible is the Niger in the Nigerian newspapers?

**Raphael Akaya:** I can say that the place is well covered adequately in the newspapers. Tv covers them also and radio. Before now a lot of attention is the area but now you can see that it is more on Boko Haram.

**Adamu Isiaka:** To me, newspapers cover the Niger Delta adequately. We get a lot in the newspapers because of their information. *Daily Trust* is just as good as *The Nation*, both cover everywhere in the country. I believe that newspapers cover the place very well. But now, most of the stories now are about Boko Haram. It is the in-thing now.

**Akaazua Elijah:** Newspapers actually cover Niger Delta well, maybe because people from the place are working in the newspapers more. I don't know whether

they do that because of the oil in the place. I think attention should be given to other parts of the country too.

**Audu Ruth:** The region gets enough share of media coverage when compared to other segments of the country. But then *Vanguard* and *punch* carry more stories about the area because they are based in Lagos and probably their owners are from there. You cannot expect newspapers published by people from other parts of the country to focus more on the Niger Delta. But the issue is that most of the write-ups are negative. Journalists emphasize crises in the Niger Delta.

**Danzaria Apollos:** To me, I can say that Nigerian newspapers adequately cover the area. I can say that papers like *Vanguard* cover the Niger Delta more than others. Maybe the owner has a special interest there. I don't really know, but maybe.

**Ejike:** Do all newspapers give approximately equal attention to the region?

**Raphael Akaya:** If you ask me I would say that it depends on the media. I believe most newspapers give a lot of attention to the Niger Delta region but not all. I think papers based in the area or let me say south give it more attention.

**Adamu Isiaka:** All the newspapers do not cover the Niger Delta equally. Some devote more time and space to the area because of interest. You find some newspapers publishing more stories about the area. Such newspapers like *Vanguard* carry even more pictures on the place than other ones. It is all about interest.

**Akaazua Elijah:** They can not give the same level of coverage to the place. Newspapers like *The Guardian* and *The Nation* pay more attention to the Niger Delta since their publishers and more of the journalists are from the South.

**Audu Ruth:** There is disparity in the way the media cover the area. Naturally, newspapers based in the north may not give as much attention to the region as those based in the south. If you open *Vanguard* or *Daily Independent*, for instance, you will find more stories on the Niger Delta than you would find in *New Nigerian*. The reason is because the publishers are not from the same part of the country.

**Danzaria Apollos:** I can say that papers like *Vanguard* cover the Niger Delta more than others. Maybe the owner has a special interest there. I don't really know, but maybe.

**Ejike:** What dominant image of the Niger Delta do you have from what you read in newspapers?



**Raphael Akaya:** I have not been to the Niger Delta before, but the stories I read about the place are scaring. They portray there as a place you can't walk freely on the street; a place you can't sleep with your two eyes closed, because you might be kidnapped. Based on the stories it is like a no-go area. But I have friends from the area who say that these things happened, but not always. Apart from newspaper reports, I think it is a place worth staying in.

**Adamu Isiaka:** My aunty lives in Port Harcourt meaning that you can also live there. I have friends who come from there too. As a Fulani man, I don't base my analysis on newspaper reports. I believe what I see. The media have shown us how degraded the Niger Delta environment is. The newspaper image of the people is that they are always disagreeing because government doesn't meet up with their demands.

**Akaazua Elijah:** My perception of the place based on what I read, is that though the people have oil, yet they are suffering. The Ogonis, for instance, have no source of drinking water because of pollution. The picture I get of the place is that of a devastated environment. Another is that the people want to control their resources and that is why they vandalize pipelines. The people are volatile; they kidnap people, even foreigners.

**Audu Ruth:** The image of the Niger Delta is that of a "no-go area". The people are painted as being hostile, violent, difficult to control, non-tolerant and uneducated. On the whole, the region is portrayed in bad light.

**Danzaria Apollos:** Stories that emanate from the Niger Delta are mostly negative. My perception of the place is that there is no peace in the area. There are a lot of problems in the area but the way government is going, I think before long their problems will be solved.

**Ejike:** What do you make out of these struggles and agitations by the people of the Niger Delta?

**Raphael Akaya:** They feel marginalized because much is got from their area but much is not given to them. I think they deserve much from the nation. Their actions are justifiable because if you are taking much from me, I, in turn, expect more from you.

**Adamu Isiaka:** I don't look at them as bad people. The newspaper image of the people is that they are always disagreeing because government doesn't meet up with their demands.

**Akaazua Elijah:** I think the people want to control their resources and that is why they vandalize pipelines.

**Audu Ruth:** I think they must be peaceful but they go into violence because government does not give them what they want. They try to defend their right. I don't look at them as bad people.

**Danzaria Apollos:** The people are just asserting their right, that's how I see it. They are marginalized and want empowerment.

### **Sample of Transcript of Discussion with Participants from Northern Nigeria Resident in the North**

**Ejike:** Let me first welcome you all to this forum. (Explained the purpose of the discussion and allowed participants to introduce themselves).

**Ejike:** How often do you read newspapers?

**Amfani:** I don't miss reading newspapers every morning. I read newspapers like the Sun, Leadership, Punch and Vanguard and People's Daily. I equally listen to radio every morning while preparing for work. To know what is happening around me.

**Isah:** I try to read newspapers every day. I read in the office most times and I read as many newspapers as possible. I like reading Vanguard, Daily Trust The Guardian and Sun or Leadership.

**Muktar:** My day will not be complete without reading newspapers. When I am driving to office I normally listen to paper reviews on radio. I read most Nigerian newspapers online, be it Thisday, Sun, Guardian, Leadership, Nation, Daily Trust, depending on what they are saying.

**Zainab:** I read newspapers daily. I read newspapers like The Sun, Daily Trust and this new one, em, em, Newswatch Daily and others that I can lay my hand on. I like knowing what is happening in the country, especially as it concerns women.

**Danladi:** I read newspapers everyday but not for so long because of pressure of work. In the office you can flip through the pages, so I prefer reading in detail during weekends. We are supplied many newspapers in the office and I try to look at them.

**Ejike:** How do you mean? Something makes you read a particular newspaper at a particular time?

**Amfani:** I like reading Thisday, The Nation and Daily Trust because they all carry national news. It is only when you read newspapers that you know what is happening around you. I look for newspapers like People's Daily or Leadership when I want more stories from the north.

**Isah:** I read Sun because it carries many interesting stories about the country. But you have more stories about the northern part of the country in newspapers such as New Nigerian, Leadership and Daily Trust, although these days the News Nigeria doesn't come out regularly.

**Muktar:** I read papers to keep myself abreast with the happenings of the day. I read newspapers depending on their headlines. I don't have preference for particular ones. It could be Punch, Champion, Guardian, or Daily Independent. Like I said, if I hear of any interesting topic on paper review for instance, I try to pick up the copy or even read it online. I can't imagine how it would be if one doesn't know about what happens around him.

**Zainab:** Yes. Like I said I read newspapers to be informed about the world and what interests me most are issues pertaining to women. It is not that I don't read about politics, but when I pick newspapers I must read the columns on women. I like The Sun for that and others too.

**Danladi:** Everybody has what interests him most. For me, I like sports and that is why I don't miss weekend papers. I read Complete Sports or Soccer Star to know what is happening in the sports world. I also read others like The Sun newspaper, The Guardian and Daily Trust for information about the country and the rest of the world.

**Ejike:** What is your understanding of the term "Niger Delta"?

**Amfani:** The Niger Delta, to the best of my knowledge is like the Middle Belt. It is a geo-political area made up of some states. The area also produces oil which is the main source of wealth of the nation. The area is important because of the oil but in terms of the food we eat in this country they come from the Middle Belt.

**Isah:** The term "Niger Delta" means those states in Nigeria in the oil producing area. It also refers to the states in the South-South geo-political zone. There used to be a lot of crisis in the area, but I think the place is a little bit calm now. It is in some part of the north that people no longer sleep because of Boko Haram..

**Muktar:** I know that the term “Niger Delta” refers to the nine oil producing states of the federation. The area is economically important to Nigeria because that is where we have the country’s oil deposit. The term equally is synonymous with militancy and kidnapping; although in the eastern part of this country now, kidnapping is the order of the day.

**Zainab:** My understanding of the term “Niger Delta” is that oil is produced there. I understand some parts of the region are in the swamp and that is why the people want the area to be developed. The activities of the restive youths in the area have forced the Federal Government to give the people some sort of attention. The militants were given amnesty and NDDC is developing the region.

**Danladi:** The Niger Delta is the area crude oil is produced in this country. My impression of the area is that there are so many crises in the place because people fight and cult members kill and destroy houses every time in the area, but it somehow calm now like Amfani said.

**Ejike:** How did you get to know about this?

**Amfani:** I get to know about the happenings in the place through the media which carry news about the area. The press told the whole world about what is happening in the Niger Delta. I have also been to Port Harcourt because my brother works in the NNPC.

**Isah:** Through the media of course. Some people have been there but I haven’t (others concurring) It is just the way we read about Boko Haram in Bornu and other parts of the north. Not everybody has come to the north but there is nobody who is not disturbed about what is happening in these areas now?

**Ejike:** What kinds of stories or pictures do newspapers often carry about the Niger Delta?

**Amfani:** The first thing that comes to mind when you hear “Niger Delta” is oil. Over the years, we have come to know much about resource control and how militant youths there fight for resource control. These youths clash with navy men in the creeks. You hear about 13 percent derivation, establishment of NDDC and Ministry of Niger Delta because government wants to help them. The President has tried for the people.

**Isah:** When you pick any newspaper, the kind of stories you always read about the Niger Delta are those on oil exploitation and militancy. Kidnapping also make headlines and crises involving youths and their elders at times.

**Muktar:** Stories that normally emanate from the area centre on militancy cultism and kidnapping which has spread to other parts of the country. The stories emanating from there equally centre on neglect, oil spills and political struggle.

**Zainab:** Stories about youths' restiveness, militants and kidnapping are what you normally read about the Niger Delta and such stories are so disturbing. These things are terrible. See what is happening in Baga and other parts of the northern states now.

**Danladi:** When you read newspapers you always see negative reports written about the area. You read stories about militants fighting with soldiers and how the youths abduct oil workers or politicians or even their relatives.

**Ejike:** How visible is the Niger Delta in the Nigerian newspapers?

**Amfani:** As I said Nigerian newspapers carry news about the area. I think the media write a lot about the people of the area, how the people want government to develop the area because they are suffering. It is just like now that they are focusing on Boko Haram problems in the north.

**Isah:** The Niger Delta gets enough media coverage compared to other segments of the country. The place has become so well known because of the attention the Nigerian media have given it.

**Muktar:** The Niger Delta has actually received adequate coverage from the Nigerian print media. The media have comparatively given preference to the region than other regions in terms of volume of reportage. I think it because of the level of attention government has given to the place.

**Zainab:** The media have reported a lot on the Niger Delta and still focusing on the region because some militants have started attacking the military. The stories are also in the internet like what is happening in some states here in the north.

**Danladi:** From the papers I read, I think the press has given them enough coverage. I can say that the press has actually projected the Niger Delta to the outside world more than it has done to any other section of the country.

**Ejike:** Do all newspapers give approximately equal attention to the region?

**Amfani:** In terms of that question, I think that all the newspapers are trying but maybe some papers give more attention to the area, like Punch or Vanguard newspapers. I think all of them are not the same in terms of that.

**Isah:** I don't think all the newspapers give equal attention to the place. It all depends on what is happening at the moment. Newspapers that are based in Lagos and other southern part of Nigeria are likely to focus more attention to the area than Leadership or People's Daily, for instance.

**Muktar:** When you look at the coverage along the line of ownership or base of the publications, you find out that papers based in the northern part of the country do not give the same level of attention to the area as their southern counterparts. Papers like the Guardian or Vanguard or the Nation tend to cover the place more. It also depends on resources. These big publications can afford to keep more reporters in every part of the country.

**Zainab:** I think it is natural that papers with more interests in the area will cover it more than others. Those in Lagos axis are more likely to write more stories about the region because of nearness. Again, the issue of being able to hire staff like my colleague said is important.

**Danladi:** Newspapers like Thisday or Guardian pay more attention to the place than Leadership for example. I think it is because these papers are closer to the area. But Daily Trust still writes about the Niger Delta; I am not saying that it does not write about the place at all.

**Ejike:** What image of the Niger Delta do you have from what you read in newspapers?

**Amfani:** Honestly, most stories about the place still bounce back to oil. The image is bad; it is like there is a war raging in the place. There is serious fighting in the riverine areas. When I visited Port Harcourt, before I could drive to any place with my brother, we got to be sure before we move; just to be sure if there is shooting anywhere. But the place is not always like that.

**Isah:** The issue is that most of the write-ups are negative. As you can see from the stories you gave us to read, they are mostly negative. The image of the Niger Delta is bad because the people are, violent and always agitating. I don't think everybody there is as bad as the press write.

**Muktar:** To me, I don't so much believe that the stories are always negative because the stories that are always termed negative actually make some people happy (laughter). I am serious; when militants themselves read such stories they feel happy that something has happened and it's likely to attract government attention. That was how they came about amnesty for the militants and that is why government is now considering amnesty for Boko Haram members also.

**Zainab:** The Niger Delta is portrayed in so much bad light and that has actually affected the area. People dreaded going there some years back because of that. The place seems to be controlled by militants and kidnappers. The same thing is applicable to the north now, but we know that it not everywhere in the north that Boko Haram is disturbing, although it is quite frightening.

**Danladi:** It can be said that the newspapers create negative images of the place due to the stories they publish like the ones you gave us. But I think the place is still good because there is a lot of money there. I read about their neglect and feel the people are fighting for their right and should be compensated.

**Ejike:** What do you make out of these struggles and agitations by the people of the Niger Delta?

**Amfani:** Ordinarily we may see them as aggressive. You ask "what kind of people are they?" But some of the politicians have been there to see why they are fighting and complaining. They are fighting a good cause; some parts of the area are irritating because of the environment. You wonder how they survive; we are all human beings. But I will blame their leaders too because they are not doing enough with the money they get.

**Isah:** This struggle was caused by something. Government abandoned the environment for so long. This country has produced oil for over 50 years now everybody is suffering. Look at other countries like Libya and Saudi Arabia; even their civil war, is Libya not better than Nigeria? I know they youths in the area caused havoc but it was because of their suffering.

**Muktar:** If you ask me I would say the people are struggling to get what they think is their right. But when they do that they should not undermine the collective interest of the nation. Government needs to develop the area and also the remotest part of my community in Kano State. That is the way to stop all these upheavals; there should be work for the youths. That's how I see it.

**Zainab:** Everything about their struggle or restiveness bothers on the fact that they feel abandoned by government, yet the nation's wealth come from the place. If government can develop the area there will be less trouble there.

**Danladi:** As I said before, the people are complaining of their neglect and are asking for compensation.



## APPENDIX IV

### Coding Guide for Content Analysis Analytical Cues/ Elements Covered

#### Topics Covered

Code	Topic	No of items	Percentage (%)	Position
01	Infrastructure			
02	Health			
03	Education			
04	Environment			
05	Crime			
06	Recreation			
07	Living			
08	Business			
09	Politics			
10	Conflict			
Total				

#### Categories of Topics covered

Code	Topic	No of Items	Percentage (%)	Position
01	News stories			
02	Features			
03	Opinions			
04	Editorials			
Total				

**Sources of Published Items**

Code	Sources	No of Items	Percentage (%)	Position
01	Government			
02	Militants			
03	Citizens			
04	Media			
05	NGOs			
06	Police			
07	Corporate bodies			
08	Religious bodies			
09	Military			
10	Political parties			
Total				

**Directional Focus**

Code	Direction	No of Items	Percentage (%)	Position
01	Favourable			
02	Unfavourable			
03	Neutral			
Total				

**Prominence**

Code	Placement	No of Items	Percentage (%)	Position
01	Front Page			
02	Inside Page			
03	Sports Page			
04	Back Page			
Total				

### **Length of Published Material**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>No of Items</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Position</b>
01	0-250 words			
02	251-500 words			
03	501-750 words			
04	751-1000 words			
05	1001 and above words			
Total				

As shown in the coding guide, each item for analysis was assigned a specific code.

This facilitated the coding and ensured that no item was left out. The coding guide was applied to all the four newspapers analyzed.

## APPENDIX V: TABLE OF STATISTICS

### NEWSPAPERS \* LENGTH OF PUBLISHED ITEMS

			LENGTH OF PUBLISHED ITEMS					Total
			0-250 WORDS	251-500 WORDS	501-750 WORDS	751-1000 WORDS	ABOVE 1000 WORDS	
NEWSPAPERS	GUARDIAN	Count	72	150	52	24	39	337
		Expected Count	140.3	128.9	28.1	14.5	25.2	337.0
		% within NEWSPAPERS	21.4%	44.5%	15.4%	7.1%	11.6%	100.0%
		% within LENGTH OF PUB. ITEMS	12.2%	27.7%	44.1%	39.3%	36.8%	23.8%
		% of Total	5.1%	10.6%	3.7%	1.7%	2.8%	23.8%
	VANGUARD	Count	389	268	40	27	46	770
		Expected Count	320.6	294.5	64.1	33.1	57.6	770.0
		% within NEWSPAPERS	50.5%	34.8%	5.2%	3.5%	6.0%	100.0%
		% within LENGTH OF PUB. ITEMS	65.9%	49.4%	33.9%	44.3%	43.4%	54.3%
		% of Total	27.5%	18.9%	2.8%	1.9%	3.2%	54.3%
	LEADERSHIP	Count	86	95	23	9	15	228
		Expected Count	94.9	87.2	19.0	9.8	17.1	228.0
		% within NEWSPAPERS	37.7%	41.7%	10.1%	3.9%	6.6%	100.0%
		% within LENGTH OF PUB. ITEMS	14.6%	17.5%	19.5%	14.8%	14.2%	16.1%
		% of Total	6.1%	6.7%	1.6%	.6%	1.1%	16.1%
	DAILY TRUST	Count	43	29	3	1	6	82
		Expected Count	34.1	31.4	6.8	3.5	6.1	82.0
		% within NEWSPAPERS	52.4%	35.4%	3.7%	1.2%	7.3%	100.0%
		% within LENGTH OF PUB. ITEMS	7.3%	5.4%	2.5%	1.6%	5.7%	5.8%
		% of Total	3.0%	2.0%	.2%	.1%	.4%	5.8%
Total	Count		590	542	118	61	106	1417
	Expected Count		590.0	542.0	118.0	61.0	106.0	1417.0
	% within NEWSPAPERS		41.6%	38.2%	8.3%	4.3%	7.5%	100.0%
	% within LENGTH OF PUB. ITEMS		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.096E2 <sup>a</sup>	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	112.302	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	28.170	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	1417		

a. 1 cells (5.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.53.

# **NEWSPAPERS \* POSITIONING OF PUBLISHED ITEMS**

			POSITIONING OF PUBLISHED ITEMS				Total
			FRONT PAGE	INSIDE PAGE	SPORTS PAGE	BACK PAGE	
NEWSPAPERS	GUARDIAN	Count	29	284	22	2	337
		Expected Count	22.8	300.9	11.2	2.1	337.0
		% within NEWSPAPERS	8.6%	84.3%	6.5%	.6%	100.0%
		% within POS. OF PUB. ITEMS	30.2%	22.5%	46.8%	22.2%	23.8%
		% of Total	2.0%	20.0%	1.6%	.1%	23.8%
	VANGUARD	Count	38	705	20	7	770
		Expected Count	52.2	687.4	25.5	4.9	770.0
		% within NEWSPAPERS	4.9%	91.6%	2.6%	.9%	100.0%
		% within POS. OF PUB. ITEMS	39.6%	55.7%	42.6%	77.8%	54.3%
		% of Total	2.7%	49.8%	1.4%	.5%	54.3%
	LEADERSHIP	Count	14	210	4	0	228
		Expected Count	15.4	203.5	7.6	1.4	228.0
		% within NEWSPAPERS	6.1%	92.1%	1.8%	.0%	100.0%
		% within POS. OF PUB. ITEMS	14.6%	16.6%	8.5%	.0%	16.1%
		% of Total	1.0%	14.8%	.3%	.0%	16.1%
	DAILY TRUST	Count	15	66	1	0	82
		Expected Count	5.6	73.2	2.7	.5	82.0
		% within NEWSPAPERS	18.3%	80.5%	1.2%	.0%	100.0%
		% within POS. OF PUB. ITEMS	15.6%	5.2%	2.1%	.0%	5.8%
		% of Total	1.1%	4.7%	.1%	.0%	5.8%
Total		Count	96	1265	47	9	1417
		Expected Count	96.0	1265.0	47.0	9.0	1417.0
		% within NEWSPAPERS	6.8%	89.3%	3.3%	.6%	100.0%
		% within POS. OF PUB. ITEMS	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	41.347 <sup>a</sup>	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	36.845	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.181	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	1417		

a. 5 cells (31.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .52.

# **NEWSPAPERS \* DIRECTIONAL FOCUS OF PUBLICATIONS**

			DIRECTIONAL FOCUS OF PUBLICATIONS			Total
			FAVOURABLE	UNFAVOURABLE	NEUTRAL	
			E	LE	L	
NEWSPAPERS	GUARDIAN	Count	108	201	28	337
		Expected Count	115.6	202.6	18.8	337.0
		% within NEWSPAPERS	32.0%	59.6%	8.3%	100.0%
		% within DIR. FOCUS OF PUB.	22.2%	23.6%	35.4%	23.8%
		% of Total	7.6%	14.2%	2.0%	23.8%
	VANGUARD	Count	285	459	26	770
		Expected Count	264.1	463.0	42.9	770.0
		% within NEWSPAPERS	37.0%	59.6%	3.4%	100.0%
		% within DIR. FOCUS OF PUB.	58.6%	53.9%	32.9%	54.3%
		% of Total	20.1%	32.4%	1.8%	54.3%
	LEADERSHIP	Count	72	141	15	228
		Expected Count	78.2	137.1	12.7	228.0
		% within NEWSPAPERS	31.6%	61.8%	6.6%	100.0%
		% within DIR. FOCUS OF PUB.	14.8%	16.5%	19.0%	16.1%
		% of Total	5.1%	10.0%	1.1%	16.1%
	DAILY TRUST	Count	21	51	10	82
		Expected Count	28.1	49.3	4.6	82.0
		% within NEWSPAPERS	25.6%	62.2%	12.2%	100.0%
		% within DIR. FOCUS OF PUB.	4.3%	6.0%	12.7%	5.8%
		% of Total	1.5%	3.6%	.7%	5.8%
Total	Count		486	852	79	1417
	Expected Count		486.0	852.0	79.0	1417.0
	% within NEWSPAPERS		34.3%	60.1%	5.6%	100.0%
	% within DIR. FOCUS OF PUB.		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	22.716 <sup>a</sup>	6	.001
Likelihood Ratio	21.710	6	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.001	1	.317
N of Valid Cases	1417		

a. 1 cells (8.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.57.

# **NEWSPAPERS \* SOURCES OF PUBLISHED ITEMS**

		SOURCES OF PUBLISHED ITEMS										Total
		GOVT	CITIZEN S	MEDIA	POLICE	RELIGIO US BODIES	MILITAR Y	COPORAT E BODIES	NGO,S	MILITAN TS	POLITICA L PARTIES	
NEWS GUARDIA PAPE N RS	Count	128	52	53	16	7	15	25	20	12	9	337
	Expected Count	105.8	66.6	61.4	12.6	5.0	14.0	16.2	36.9	8.6	10.0	337.0
	% within NEWSPAPERS	38.0%	15.4%	15.7%	4.7%	2.1%	4.5%	7.4%	5.9%	3.6%	2.7%	100.0 %
	% within SOU. OF PUB. ITEMS	28.8%	18.6%	20.5%	30.2%	33.3%	25.4%	36.8%	12.9%	33.3%	21.4%	23.8%
	% of Total	9.0%	3.7%	3.7%	1.1%	.5%	1.1%	1.8%	1.4%	.8%	.6%	23.8%
VANGUAR D	Count	192	175	150	29	13	30	36	108	18	19	770
	Expected Count	241.8	152.2	140.2	28.8	11.4	32.1	37.0	84.2	19.6	22.8	770.0
	% within NEWSPAPERS	24.9%	22.7%	19.5%	3.8%	1.7%	3.9%	4.7%	14.0%	2.3%	2.5%	100.0 %
	% within SOU. OF PUB. ITEMS	43.1%	62.5%	58.1%	54.7%	61.9%	50.8%	52.9%	69.7%	50.0%	45.2%	54.3%
	% of Total	13.5%	12.4%	10.6%	2.0%	.9%	2.1%	2.5%	7.6%	1.3%	1.3%	54.3%
LEADERS HIP	Count	92	37	41	2	1	10	3	24	6	12	228
	Expected Count	71.6	45.1	41.5	8.5	3.4	9.5	10.9	24.9	5.8	6.8	228.0
	% within NEWSPAPERS	40.4%	16.2%	18.0%	.9%	.4%	4.4%	1.3%	10.5%	2.6%	5.3%	100.0 %

	% within SOU. OF PUB. ITEMS	20.7%	13.2%	15.9%	3.8%	4.8%	16.9%	4.4%	15.5%	16.7%	28.6%	16.1%
	% of Total	6.5%	2.6%	2.9%	.1%	.1%	.7%	.2%	1.7%	.4%	.8%	16.1%
DAILY TRUST	Count	33	16	14	6	0	4	4	3	0	2	82
	Expected Count	25.8	16.2	14.9	3.1	1.2	3.4	3.9	9.0	2.1	2.4	82.0
	% within NEWSPAPERS	40.2%	19.5%	17.1%	7.3%	.0%	4.9%	4.9%	3.7%	.0%	2.4%	100.0%
	% within SOU OF PUB. ITEMS	7.4%	5.7%	5.4%	11.3%	.0%	6.8%	5.9%	1.9%	.0%	4.8%	5.8%
	% of Total	2.3%	1.1%	1.0%	.4%	.0%	.3%	.3%	.2%	.0%	.1%	5.8%
Total	Count	445	280	258	53	21	59	68	155	36	42	1417
	Expected Count	445.0	280.0	258.0	53.0	21.0	59.0	68.0	155.0	36.0	42.0	1417.0
	% within NEWSPAPERS	31.4%	19.8%	18.2%	3.7%	1.5%	4.2%	4.8%	10.9%	2.5%	3.0%	100.0%
	% within SOU. OF PUB. ITEMS	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	31.4%	19.8%	18.2%	3.7%	1.5%	4.2%	4.8%	10.9%	2.5%	3.0%	100.0%

### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	83.193 <sup>a</sup>	27	.000
Likelihood Ratio	91.862	27	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.497	1	.221
N of Valid Cases	1417		

a. 8 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5.  
The minimum expected count is 1.22.

**NEWSPAPERS \* TOPICS COVERED**

			TOPICS COVERED										Total
			INFRAS TRUCT URE	HEAL TH	EDU CATI ON	CRIM E	ENVIRO NMENT	LIVING	CONFL ICT	BUSIN ESS	RECRE ATION	POLI TICS	
NEWSPAPERS	GUARDIAN	Count	19	5	15	58	24	9	83	30	26	68	337
		Expected Count	25.9	8.3	13.6	64.9	13.8	14.7	82.5	27.8	11.4	74.0	337.0
		% within NEWSPAPERS	5.6%	1.5%	4.5%	17.2%	7.1%	2.7%	24.6%	8.9%	7.7%	20.2%	100.0%
		% within TOPICS COVERED	17.4%	14.3%	26.3%	21.2%	41.4%	14.5%	23.9%	25.6%	54.2%	21.9%	23.8%
		% of Total	1.3%	.4%	1.1%	4.1%	1.7%	.6%	5.9%	2.1%	1.8%	4.8%	23.8%
	VANGUARD	Count	54	18	32	153	18	43	182	65	18	187	770
		Expected Count	59.2	19.0	31.0	148.3	31.5	33.7	188.6	63.6	26.1	169.0	770.0
		% within NEWSPAPERS	7.0%	2.3%	4.2%	19.9%	2.3%	5.6%	23.6%	8.4%	2.3%	24.3%	100.0%
		% within TOPICS COVERED	49.5%	51.4%	56.1%	56.0%	31.0%	69.4%	52.4%	55.6%	37.5%	60.1%	54.3%
		% of Total	3.8%	1.3%	2.3%	10.8%	1.3%	3.0%	12.8%	4.6%	1.3%	13.2%	54.3%
	LEADER SHIP	Count	35	10	8	49	10	8	55	14	2	37	228
		Expected Count	17.5	5.6	9.2	43.9	9.3	10.0	55.8	18.8	7.7	50.0	228.0

		% within NEWSPAPERS	15.4%	4.4%	3.5%	21.5%	4.4%	3.5%	24.1%	6.1%	.9%	16.2%	100.0%
		% within TOPICS COVERED	32.1%	28.6%	14.0%	17.9%	17.2%	12.9%	15.9%	12.0%	4.2%	11.9%	16.1%
		% of Total	2.5%	.7%	.6%	3.5%	.7%	.6%	3.9%	1.0%	.1%	2.6%	16.1%
	DAILY TRUST	Count	1	2	2	13	6	2	27	8	2	19	82
		Expected Count	6.3	2.0	3.3	15.8	3.4	3.6	20.1	6.8	2.8	18.0	82.0
		% within NEWSPAPERS	1.2%	2.4%	2.4%	15.9%	7.3%	2.4%	32.9%	9.8%	2.4%	23.2%	100.0%
		% within TOPICS COVERED	.9%	5.7%	3.5%	4.8%	10.3%	3.2%	7.8%	6.8%	4.2%	6.1%	5.8%
		% of Total	.1%	.1%	.1%	.9%	.4%	.1%	1.9%	.6%	.1%	1.3%	5.8%
	Total	Count	109	35	57	273	58	62	347	117	48	311	1417
		Expected Count	109.0	35.0	57.0	273.0	58.0	62.0	347.0	117.0	48.0	311.0	1417.0
		% within NEWSPAPERS	7.7%	2.5%	4.0%	19.3%	4.1%	4.4%	24.5%	8.3%	3.4%	21.9%	100.0%
		% within TOPICS COVERED	100.0%	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0 %	100.0%
		% of Total	7.7%	2.5%	4.0%	19.3%	4.1%	4.4%	24.5%	8.3%	3.4%	21.9%	100.0%

### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	88.871 <sup>a</sup>	27	.000
Likelihood Ratio	84.214	27	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.418	1	.036
N of Valid Cases	1417		

a. 5 cells (12.5%) have expected count less than 5.  
The minimum expected count is 2.03.

## APPENDIX VI

### Research Instrument for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

The following instrument was used in effecting close reading and interpretation of the meanings embedded in the items analysed:

**Description:** This was done to demonstrate the kind of emphasis the newspapers gave to issues and events concerning the Niger Delta.

**Analysis:** This involved thematic analysis of the published items with a view to finding out the position, status, or prominence accorded the issues and events pertaining to the Niger Delta.

**Interpretation:** This involved the explanation of the meanings, framing and articulation of verbatim presentation, considering the surface structure of the text, and the texbase representation or portrayal. This was done to determine the concept and meanings of the text vis-à-vis the macrostructure ( i.e. the main idea in the text) and the microstructure (i.e. the supporting ideas in the text).

**Tone:** This refers to the manner of presentation which revealed specific attitudes towards the subject as shown in choice of words and phrases.

**Language:** This was the overall structure which portrayed particular significations and symbolic codes about a given subject.

**Characterization:** This refers to the specific choice of words from a wide range of available options, to construct and characterize certain people, social relations or events in a particular way to reinforce and legitimize the ideology that have been communicated in the themes of the discourse.

**Labeling;** It refer to specific lexical items or “tags” that sort out persons or a group into specific social categories that determine how members of the public should understand and judge their actions.

**Agency Attribution:** Through agency attribution, the identities of who takes certain



actions and who receives the benefits, or suffers the consequences of such actions are revealed.

**Agency Deletion:** This refers to the discursive strategy by which the agents in the clauses of the headlines and bodies of reports are deleted through the process of nominalisation and passivization.

**Atmosphere:** This referred to the general mode or impression which the piece conveyed to the reader or viewer.

**Evaluation:** Through the evaluation of the text, proper definition/rating of the Niger Delta in the newspapers was ascertained.

# APPENDIX VII

## Table of Random Numbers

Random Numbers									
61285	07068	22452	57376	21242	17862	34455	87861	68267	73886
56842	75893	24824	11508	73241	61735	87493	91590	58567	21433
83379	07294	96793	71360	35503	38330	55267	71611	67475	15985
70032	23033	67592	17276	58125	68188	34370	66462	27282	29982
12462	17135	82285	95753	72772	20736	10242	29611	67957	00426
82634	46763	92838	21357	72444	13543	15809	56684	68346	57939
96288	58891	62386	17345	21011	75315	12239	95406	34908	29806
60498	40846	31794	36868	86804	76726	53447	78068	94493	06503
56104	81174	85519	17681	36376	28255	87115	44834	20653	42302
60416	33391	95645	14311	01915	44145	37830	26807	53745	57189
82946	86707	38368	45776	80965	25234	11764	19408	92702	58544
31581	58877	45303	90248	29117	39095	63392	21665	26225	34986
63073	35656	22682	11393	59638	27235	74410	71774	29982	64961
98016	77985	94501	74547	81681	36775	77601	39152	21773	74123
78197	70345	88237	39805	89978	61843	27307	95173	74710	56784
23827	06325	63920	70424	80786	59019	28567	29707	89598	36356
92164	82637	83241	24578	15728	84939	57621	36562	41567	21006
61030	72793	25436	97741	62807	55664	40248	52078	74119	68021
58039	86465	59843	86135	05306	89891	93785	41738	82244	90937
67543	48098	97777	38627	11806	69406	14576	84619	96532	09634
13044	94442	12523	69018	31939	19070	15634	62396	81360	02132
44931	41323	96536	87367	54417	92886	39762	75261	13206	41835
82238	34257	62862	15504	29917	85453	62881	84922	87751	14752
93964	88645	95125	61660	62121	93252	28715	66944	13011	83788
19042	12154	23520	92775	47127	26218	48990	67822	90293	60806
74721	79323	63876	56214	61009	33510	71061	31849	86786	11658
30346	21063	65983	84323	52471	66339	57997	57181	45319	65037
30147	13958	68591	57428	51905	69148	63821	39120	92991	58551
		49332	20017	42826	78226	52437	10882	19960	17084
							94087	25471	86138

## Random Numbers (Continued)

95361	29804	78834	55956	60645	62333	35475	05122	96533	56429
10726	35647	15378	59696	17342	61950	91228	53597	14148	92233
58455	47498	93707	29871	34042	48985	90319	57889	52422	54195
81925	54845	82789	29488	97063	30296	87476	60331	24536	69650
31181	50909	26202	78877	77833	32687	77073	32507	57137	36272
82466	98292	90654	23205	10717	13602	14000	48249	82350	53061
25289	11437	26827	81063	33205	76649	34206	70213	85665	65923
54646	82902	31923	78934	45737	33020	49601	83344	53476	67911
33657	91329	71616	49971	56344	79052	26477	32117	37135	41311
06141	63062	83870	76303	42135	68886	71377	51283	65810	70902
75006	79591	93584	62368	25549	87338	88724	04188	19523	16771
97147	40230	45367	87124	98812	34559	28094	70708	35852	64364
41327	40009	25422	66272	37604	72743	58694	05026	96955	18681
30104	73933	59772	85998	63715	65077	51710	69888	20129	15195
53875	76952	35241	97504	46780	39117	43916	54159	61474	13169
02373	36459	69553	57019	24324	19078	52219	06724	29883	38368
15484	51475	14474	66519	87360	59837	79668	57847	37330	85020
79348	49057	94798	63480	11508	94978	29766	13627	49224	94136
13921	66981	57202	89998	91302	17460	56816	30661	16412	29734
46484	53042	68542	92935	62473	80166	46917	27163	87342	51503
61731	45087	89812	76551	98075	41721	97320	98835	24249	54851
96838	98073	18700	92070	21344	28927	73299	80284	21039	60719
96219	15660	95916	61982	38819	30633	53969	39474	96862	52471
73188	29062	37888	80712	33576	16956	37179	14887	23532	15233
40206	51561	93265	78655	95645	11411	88897	12059	84779	87462
00507	88479	71233	15485	58749	87625	10726	42247	98119	93685
96386	98240	19885	10512	82524	87139	51675	61092	56010	53684
25806	38611	40534	48032	80928	52516	44576	12788	11578	58797
84269	55328	72668	28861	74374	98534	59813	83317	56962	55638
10097	61554	34539	93525	11807	63933	29875	53684	58797	55638

## APPENDIX VIII

### Table of Selected Days, Using a Table of Random Numbers

#### January

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13*	14*	15	16	17*	18	19*
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29*	30	31		

#### February

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5*	6	7	8*	9
10	11	12	13	14	15*	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28*	29	

#### March

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7*	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17*	18*	19	20	21	22*
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

#### April

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8*	9	10	11*	12
13*	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26*
27	28	29	30*			

**May**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12*	13	14	15	16*	17
18*	19	20	21	22*	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31*

**June**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3*	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16*	17*	18	19	20	21	22
23	24*	25	26	27	28	29
30						

**July**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4*	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13*	14	15	16*	17	18	19
20	21*	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31*		

**August**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6*	7	8	9
10	11	12*	13	14*	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25*	26	27*	28	29	30
31						

### September

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2*	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10*	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20*
21	22	23*	24	25	26*	27
28	29	30				

### October

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5*	6	7	8	9	10	11
12*	13	14	15	16*	17	18*
19	20	21*	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

### November

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1*
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9*	10	11	12	13*	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21*	22
23*	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

### December

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13*
14	15*	16	17	18	19	20
21	22*	23*	24	25	26*	27
28	29	30	31			

Key: \* Days selected through a lucky deep.

## APENDIX IX

### Samples of Published Items on the Niger Delta









## Children protest spate of kidnappings in Rivers

More than 300 children in Port Harcourt yesterday protested the rising incidents of kidnapping in Rivers State, and therefore challenged the state government to find a lasting solution to the problem.

The children, carrying placards and accompanied by their parents, marched to the Government House, Port Harcourt, where they were received by the secretary to the state government, Mr. Magnus Abe.

In presenting their grievances to government, the children expressed fears that the security of their peers was no longer guaranteed in the state, unless the rate of kidnappings was reduced.

But the secretary to the state government, Magnus Abe assured the children that the state government is doing everything possible to stop menace in the state, noting that the children and their parents also have a role to play in the process.

Some of the children, who spoke to journalists during the protest march, noted that the youths in the state would not engage in kidnapping if government provides job opportunities for them.

From Henry Omasu, Port Harcourt

One of the protesting children, Precious Obasi, said children in the state opted to visit the Government House to seek peace and to appeal to the state governor to urgently address the wave of kidnapping being faced by

children and women.

"We are appealing to the governor to put an end to kidnapping; that he should provide schools and job opportunities for the drop-outs. He should provide job opportunities for graduates that don't have jobs."

He should also put an end to prostitution; some

children now drop out of school and go for prostitution. He should also put an end to child abuse", Obasi said.

Responding, Abe apologized to the children for the predicament they have found themselves, and blamed the adults in the society for the gross vices prevalent in society.

## I watched as snipers killed six kidnappers

### BAYELSA SSG's WIFE

By Samuel Oyoradonga

**YENAGOA—WIFE** of the Secretary to the Bayelsa State Government, Mrs. Augusta Ekeuweli broke her silence on her seventeen days in captivity saying she watched in horror as snipers who rescued her from the jaws of death shot dead six of her kidnappers.

Speaking at a thanksgiving service at the Doxa Family Church where she was abducted by armed gunmen on June 1, 2008 few days before her husband was appointed as SSG, Mrs. Ekeuweli held the congregation spellbound with her graphic description of how she was kidnapped, her experience in the hands of the kidnappers and how she was eventually rescued on the last day her captors had threatened to waste her life owing to the alleged refusal of her husband to co-operate with them.

The nursing mother said it was by the Grace of God that she survived what she described as her journey through the valley of death and prayed that not even her enemy should undergo what she passed through.

Mrs. Ekeuweli, who said it was while in captivity that

she observed her first menstruation after giving birth to her last child noted with sadness that she did not take her bath during her incarceration. "I was smelling all over as I saw my first menstruation after child birth and it was the same time I defecated that I was confined to making it difficult for me to eat the food they offered me."

Narrating her ordeal, Mrs. Ekeuweli who had every reason to thank God for sparing her life during the seventeen days she was kept incarcerated, said, "I woke up and took my children to church about 8am. Being a children teacher I was singing with the children and after a while as I was about breast feeding my child I saw some armed gunmen on the other side of the road who marched straight to church and ordered me to follow them. I complied and went with them to their waiting bus and they zoomed off."

According to her, they (gunmen) told her to pray warning that if they were attacked by security operatives they will not hesitate to kill her.

Continuing she said, "on getting to the outskirts of town they stopped and ordered me

to come down from the vehicle after blind folding me and took me into the forest.

"Later a man they called commander came and collected my husband number. My thinking was that my husband will come the next day and secure my release but this was not to be as it turned out to be a long wait."

She said though her hus-

band was able to speak with her captors but that there was heated argument on the phone as he refused to accede to their demand for ransom insisting that he does not have the amount they were demanding for.

"In spite of the threat from my captors that they will shoot my leg if he refused to cooperate with them my husband was adamant that "God will take care of the situation."

## Armed thugs abduct female magistrate in Warri

By Emma Amaize

**WARRI—A GANG** of eight armed thugs on Wednesday evening in Warri, Delta State abducted a female magistrate, 31-year-old Mrs. Emuokene I. Bazuwa-Sokoh.

Investigations by *Vanguard* showed that the kidnap of Magistrate Bazuwa-Sokoh was allegedly sponsored by a female colleague in the state, who accused her and another friend of dating her husband.

Mrs. Edirin Barum, a civil servant and mother of the kidnapped magistrate who confirmed the abduction of her daughter told *Vanguard*, yesterday, in Warri, "The kidnappers, numbering about eight came to my house at the Delta Development Property Authority (DDPA) Estate, Warri at about 6.30 pm in two vehicles and started breaking the doors, windows and ordered her daughter, who was inside the house to follow them or she would be killed".

She said they beat the daughter, as they dragged her out of the house and bundled

a manhunt was launched for the thugs, who called her daughter's friend on phone, threatening that they would deal with the magistrate if she did not show up.

Investigations by *Vanguard* showed that the suspect had earlier invited the magistrate to her father's house on the pretext that she wanted her to assist her

with information on a divorce case involving the husband of her senior sister.

Mrs. Bazuwa-Sokoh was said to have innocently visited the family house, not knowing that it was a set up. She was beaten up by thugs on the orders of her host and was only rescued by some good Samaritans.

Not satisfied with her

escapades, the suspect allegedly dispatched thugs to her house, who kidnapped her and gave her another round of beating before she was dumped at the B Division, Okunagba Layout, Warri where she was rescued by the police.

Mrs. Bazuwa said her daughter denied knowing or dating anyone.

# NIGER DELTA

POLITICS AND BUSINESS OF OIL

ATION

NIGER DELTA

## Militants attack JTF in bid to recover seized crude

EMMA AMAIZE

**G**UNMEN, weekend, attacked men of the Joint Task Force (JTF) on the Niger-Delta at two separate locations in Delta State in an audacious bid to recover barges loaded with stolen crude oil that were confiscated from oil bunkers by the military.

The first attack, according to information available to *Starline Vanguard*, was targeted at the JTF troops that seized four barges at Abogwe creek, along Benin River. The military men who were securing the barges, three of which were loaded with stolen crude, repelled the offensive and injured some of the suspected militants, who fled the scene when they noticed the superior firepower of the soldiers.

It was also learnt that on Independence day, the gunmen launched another attack on the JTF operatives who they wanted to catch unaware, but the men were equal to the task. Confirming the attacks on the JTF troops, the coordinator of the Joint Media Campaign Centre (JMCC) in Warri, Lt Col Rabe Abubakar, said: "On Independence day, our troops arrested four barges at Abogwe creek along Benin River. Three of the barges were loaded with substances suspected to be crude oil, while one was empty. Troops securing the arrested barges were attacked by militants suspected to be operating from Okerekokoko. The attack was successfully repelled without casualty on our side while the attackers escaped with injuries."

He went on: "While patriotic Nigerians were celebrating our 48th Independence anniversary, some suspected militants from Okerekokoko launched a second unprovoked attack in an attempt to release the barges. The attack was also successfully repelled." Besides, the spokesman said, a barge towed by a wooden boat and eight persons suspected to be

Okerekokoko creek in Delta State. "All those arrested together with the barges are in our custody and are undergoing investigation", Abubakar disclosed.

He, however, said, "Information available to us revealed that angered by the seizures and the botched attempts to release the barges, militants are planning to attack our locations at Dhal, Oloro, Abibayo and Escravos targeting oil installations and facilities."

The spokesman pointed out that the commander of the JTF, Brig Gen Naiven W. Rinsip, had warned those planning the attack to desist in their own interest as such would amount to committing suicide because men of the task force have been placed on high alert. "The commander has vowed that they will pay a very

high price for their actions if they choose to go ahead with their planned attack, because our troops are at maximum alert to deter the planned attack", he said.

"In another development, our troops on patrol recovered 130 vandalized (4-inch) SPDC's pipes at Okowon village in Sapale. The vandals escaped through a nearby river on sighting own troops. Our operation against illegal bunkering is a continuous exercise and no amount of threat or violence will intimidate us as we are professionals in the act of management of violence."

Abubakar also debunked the allegation by some militants that the JTF carried a raid on their camp, saying the militants were losing relevance, as well-meaning citizens are tired of their so-called camp struggle.

## 15 Corpses Recovered From Bonny Waters

RIVERS

FROM ALISTINE UNOGRUMI, PORT HARCOURT

**F**ollowing incessant attacks from Niger Delta militants on unsuspecting persons which has often resulted in gun battle between the Joint Task Force and the militants in regions on the high sea, ten corpses suspected to be bodies of militants, were again recovered from the Bonny waters on Sunday, bringing the number of bodies so far found to fifteen within the last few weeks. Inhabitants of Bonny Island reliably disclosed this to LEADERSHIP.

Confirming the development, Army Public Relation Officer and spokesman of the Joint Task Force, Col Musa Sagir, also described as untrue the rumour making the rounds that a group of militants snatched gun boat belonging to the JTF during an encounter last Friday.

According to the Army spokesman, "men of the Joint Task Force in the state, encountered militants who were on ten speed boats, two of their boats sunk with all the occupants, our soldiers on ground also recovered four corpses of the militants, and four AK 47 rifles."

The militants who were chasing a supply vessel when they ran into a team of the JTF on the waters, were the first to open fire. In the ensuing battle, two of their boats were sunk with all the occupants. To snatch a gun boat from military personnel on duty is very very impossible. To do that entails the killing of all the soldiers attached to the boat. But as long as they are alive, intact, it means the story is misleading.

Since the community source accepted that none of our soldiers were wounded in the process, it thus means that to say our boat was snatched is illogical. Ten speed boats belonging to militants encountered our men at their location. We sunk two of their boats. That Friday we recovered four corpses of the militants and four AK 47 rifles," he said.

## Soldiers Foil Robbery Operation, Arrest 4 Persons

BAYELSA

FROM OSA OKIDIMINA, YENAGOA

**M**en of the Joint Military Task Force code named Operation Restore Hope on Monday, arrested four persons suspected to be a member of a 481 gang specialised in the abduction and robbery of innocent.

The arrest of the four men, occurred around noon during a routine stop and search exercise along the Agidama-Epie area of the state by operatives of the Bayelsa State Command of the JTF.

LEADERSHIP gathered that the arrested men in a Santana Volkswagen vehicle numbered CM199-ENJ were intercepted along the Port Harcourt Housing Estate in Agidama after a distress call was put through to the JTF when a civil servant was disposed of the sum of N4 million.

The suspects, according to eyewitnesses, were five in number, but that the lady member of the gang escaped arrest. The suspects were arrested with N80,000 out of the stolen sum.

Preliminary investigation, LEADERSHIP gathered, revealed that the five men gang were lured from their base in Enugu State to the state by one spare party dealer in Yenagoa with an assurance that the business transaction in the state capital were mostly in cash and that security is always porous in some areas.

Parading the suspect at the Joint Military Task Force Headquarters in Opolo-Epie, the Commander of the JTF, Lt. Col. Chris Musa said the suspects would be handed over to the state Police Command for further interrogation and prosecution.

He said the alleged man responsible for the movement of the men into the state is reported to have absconded to Abuja. He stated that with the quick alert of his men they were able to arrest the suspects, "all we are asking is that the men should be informed in any case of robbery and incidents like this."

He urged the residents of the state to partner with the Joint Military Task Force.

Two of the suspects, Keinet Beta and Upochukwu

# JTF Nabs Oil Theives

By CHUKA OTUCHIKERE  
AND FEMI AKINOLA

14 Filipinos, Greek Involved

Fourteen Filipinos and a Greek national who attempted to ferry 150,000 metric tonnes of stolen crude oil out of the

country were out of luck on Friday as operatives of the Joint Task Force, JTF, intercepted their vessel. The JTF, otherwise Operation Restore Hope,

arrested the ocean-going vessel identified as MT Lina Panama and its crew members made up of the foreigners with their booty suspected to be stolen

from the Niger Delta region, just as they were about to sail out of Nigeria's territorial waters. Two suspects believed to be their Nigerian accomplices

Continued on page 2

He said he was going to declare an emergency. If you want to declare an emergency you declare it because an emergency is an emergency. If you walk into your house and the house is flooded because the taps were left open, you don't wait for 24 hours to declare an emergency. Right there and then, you dry the water and clear the carpet

Former PDP national chairman, Chief Anuolupe Ogbeh, on Yar'Adua's government

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NEWS 3

## Gunmen Invade Rivers' Dep. Speaker's Home

FROM KELVIN EBIRI,  
PORT HARCOURT

GUNMEN suspected to be assassins on Thursday night invaded the official residence of the Deputy Speaker of the Rivers State House of Assembly, Charles Beffor Ndilea Chief Releases Names Of Drug Traffickers

Ndilea, in Port Harcourt. The Guardian learnt that six gunmen barged into the Deputy Speaker's residence at Amachi Flat, at about 8.30 p.m. The suspected assassins, who arrived the house in an infinity jeep, were said to have disarmed a police guard at the gate before gaining entrance into the house.

A source close to the Ndilea's family explained that the gunmen demand-

ed to see the Deputy Speaker's wife and were told that both she and her husband were not at home. Intrigued by the absence of the couple, the gunmen opted to seize the police guard's AK 47 rifle. The Joint Task Force (JTF) spokesperson, Lt. Colonel Sagis Musa, who confirmed the incident said: "They were suspected assassins who went to the Deputy Speaker's residence at Amachi Flat at

about 8.30pm but did not meet him. No one was shot but they made away with a police guard's weapon. The JTF and police are on their trail. Gunmen had in October kidnapped Mr. Lawrence Ndilea, the 70-year-old father-of-the-householder, from his native Bane community in Khana local council area of the state. He was released after 10 days in captivity.

In another incident, gunmen robbed a commercial bank in Bonny yesterday while a bullion van conveying cash from Abuja to the Central Bank in Port Harcourt was attacked and four police escorts severely injured. Sources in Bonny told The Guardian that the bandits stormed the bank at about 11am and shot their way into the banking hall where a huge amount of money was

later carted away. Three persons were shot. The robbers escaped through the creche.

Similarly, armed robbers attacked a bullion van close to Obio, in Abia State. Four policemen escorting the bullion van to the Central Bank in Port Harcourt were injured. The gunmen riddled the bullion van with bullets and made away with an unspecified amount of money.

## Why we struck on Sunday — MEND

By Emma Amaize & Samuel Oyedunla

WARRI—THE Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) said yesterday that last Sunday's attack on a military houseboat stationed at the Shell Petroleum TARA manifold in Bayelsa State by its men was a "minor attack" to commemorate the fifth month of the incarceration of its leader, Henry Okah, in Angola.

In a statement, signed by Jono Glomo, the group said Okah, who it described as a peace and environmental activist, was arrested on September 3, 2007 in Angola on trumped-up charges.

"It (February 3 attack) also dispels the false impression being given by the Nigerian

government to investors that peace has been restored after a fraudulent peace deal," the statement said.

Three naval ratings were killed by militants during the attack while some officials of the Shell Petroleum Development Company were injured but the group was silent on any death figures in its statement.

Commander of the JTF on the Niger Delta, Major General Lawrence Nguah, was said to have deployed gunboats in the area.

Fear grips residents Meanwhile, fear has gripped residents of the coastal settlements of Bayelsa East senatorial district bordering Rivers and Bayelsa States over possible military action in the area following the Sunday attack by militants.



## ACROSS THE

## JTF nabs 3 suspected kidnappers in Rivers

... As Odili's nephew regains freedom

By George Onah

**PORT HARCOURT**—THREE suspected kidnappers were rounded up, yesterday, by the Rivers State Joint Task Force at Oghakiri, in Emuoha Local Government, just 12 hours after Mr. Eni Odili, a nephew of former governor of the state was set free by those who kidnapped him last Sunday.

Eni was set free at 10 p.m. Tuesday at an undisclosed location in Port Harcourt suburb, following which he was seen off to his house by operatives of the SSS. His kidnappers demanded N80 million but brought the demand to N50 million. But it could not be confirmed if any ransom was paid.

In the interim, the abductors of the two toddlers, who were seized while being taken to school, Tuesday, in Choba along Unipert road, have demanded N80 as ransom for the release of the children.

Vanguard reliably gathered from a security source that the three suspects were members of a notorious cult group operating at Emuoha which specializes in hostage-taking, banditry and brigandage of the worst form.

The source, which did not want

his name in print, said the group had been linked to the series of carnage, crisis in the council and Port Harcourt, the state capital, stating "they have been on the wanted list for some months now. These boys have been terrorizing their people for a long time. They have been involved in many crises and were planning for a kidnap operation before they were taken."

They use fast engine motorcycles to rob people and before security operatives arrive, they would have zoomed off. Currently, they are giving useful information to us and we would track down others."

Confirming the developments, Spokesperson of the JTF and 2 Amphibious Brigade PRO said Odili had been released and had since joined his family back home.

On the capture of the kidnappers, he said intelligence report and snip operation at Oghakiri led JTF to their hideout, giving their names as Stanley Nwaeke, Junior Nwoji and Nwobodo Bright. "The three suspected persons were arrested at 18:45 hours yesterday at Oghakiri in Emuoha Local Government Area. They were on motorcycles when our men apprehended them."

## NIGER-DELTA

## JTF arrests 10 cultists P-Harcourt

By Jimitota Onoyume

**PORT HARCOURT**—ABOUT ten suspected militants and cultists were arrested yesterday when men of the Joint Task Force in Rivers State combed Abomema Wharf/ Njemmanze parts of the state capital in its bid to rid the area of microbans and brigands.

According to residents in the area, as early as 5am, they started hearing sporadic gun shots. Not knowing what was happening many fled their houses. "We thought it was an exchange of fire between warring cult groups. We had to hurriedly lock our door and disappear from the area for fear of being hit by stray bullets. There was panic in the neighbourhood," Nwobodo

said. When a comment on the r of the JTF and at state, Lieutenant said nobody was those arrested w over to the appr for prosecution.

It is true that areas. And abor were arrested. N over those an appropriate sec prosecution"

It would be rec hoodlums in the came on Njemanz bullets at innocent. The incident led about three liv generated least capital.

## Rival Militants In Gun Battle In Bayelsa

Yar'Adua invites Gov Sylva, JTF commander

FROM OSA OKIKOMENA, YINAGOA AND FROM ADIESUNA OSUNDI, ABUJA

**T**here was palpable tension in the Presidency and Tsvangirai Holes Up At Dutch Embassy

FROM KUNLE SOMORIN, WITH AGENCY REPORTS

**Z**imbabwe's opposition leader, Morgan

Continued on page 3

Bayelsa State yesterday over confrontation between militia groups loyal to the peace pact initiated in the state and those against the process as they engaged in heavy gun duel over a planned invasion of creeks and waterways in the state.

Consequently, the Bayelsa State Governor, Chief Tiriapre Sylva, was believed to have contacted the Presidency over

Continued on page 2

Glo Pays

## Rival Militants In Gun Duel In Bay

Continued from front page

the invasion of the state territorial waters by militants with known base in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

The Chief Press Secretary to the governor, Mr. Ola Dotie, told LEADERSHIP last night that he has not been briefed on the matter.

Also summoned to the Defence Headquarters in Abuja are the commander of the Joint Military Task Force (JTF) in the Niger Delta and the Commander of the 73rd Battalion of the JTF in Bayelsa State, Lt. Col. Sagor Musa.

The first sign of tension and hostilities along the Bayelsa waterways emerged on Friday following the release of the American, Jack Stone.

Mr. Stone, who was kidnapped by some unknown gunmen on the vessel close to the Bonga offshore oil-field, was released with the help of some militants committed to the peace pact reached with the state government.

A reliable security source close to the Bayelsa State Government House revealed that when the President was

reported to have issued an order directing military action against the militia involved in the invasion of the Bonga oil-field, the militant groups against the "peaceful" conduct of over 14 militia camps in Bayelsa decided to move in and establish a camp to house vicious militias that would be ready to confront the military.

One of the camps attacked over the weekend was being controlled by a militia leader known as Igodo.

Reports had it that some known faces suspected to be loyal to the militant Atake Tom of Rivers State were part of the action and that Igodo was seriously wounded, with his legs riddled with bullets. But none of those contacted could confirm whether he is alive or dead.

LEADERSHIP however witnessed the tense sign yesterday in Yanagosa as the state governor scheduled interactive session with over 22,000 civil servants in the state was abruptly aborted over the emergency invasion.

The civil servants, who converged at the state's Glory

Land Cultural Centre to have a chance to ask the governor direct questions on their welfare, left the venue disappointed, following an announcement by the press office that the governor had flown to Abuja for a meeting with the President.

But another aide dismissed any claim of panic and said the governor was summoned like all other governors of the Niger Delta to discuss the issues of recent media exchange of words between armed militia groups and the Federal Government over the recent presidential directive of military action and the proposed summit on the region.

Meanwhile, contrary to speculations that there were casualties in the Bonga attack by militants last Thursday, the facility, owned by Shell, did not suffer any damage nor were there any casualties as the militants could not gain entry into the facility, which was put under lock and key before the invasion.

This was disclosed by the Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Petroleum (upstream),

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## NEWS

## Rivers urges militants to lay down arms

**D**ETERMINED to ensure peace, the Rivers State government yesterday admonished militants in the state to lay down their arms.

The state said the appeal became necessary not to allow each militant suffer the fate that has befallen the wanted leader of the People's Liberation Force (PLF), Soboma Jachrich (also known as Ebi Papa) who was arrested on Sunday by the Joint Task Force (JTF).

Ebi Papa, who is suspected to have masterminded the abduction of the wife of oil magnate, Chief O.B. Lulu-Briggs in April this year, was arrested by scores of soldiers at the palace of the Amanyabo of Kalabari in Buguma, Asiri-Toru Council of Rivers State.

The state Commissioner for Information, Mr. Oghonna Nwuke, told *The Guardian* yesterday that the state was committed to its pledge to forgive all those bearing arms who voluntarily surrender their arms and ammunition to the government.

Nwuke who noted that the country was not at war, wondered why youths in the Niger Delta should be bearing arms for the purpose of agitating

*From Kelvin Ebi, Port Harcourt*

ing for the development of the long neglected region. He admonished the so-called militants who were still at large to surrender their arms and avoid being caught up by the long arm of law.

Nwuke said: "We are hopeful that any of our sons who lay down his arms will see what we can do to appeal to the Federal Government which has the power to grant amnesty to forgive them. The governor is committed to his word to forgive those who lay down their arms. No one

should wait to be arrested first before they lay down their arms."

He denied allegation that the state government had initiated a peace process which prompted Ebi Papa (PLF) to visit the Amanyabo of Kalabari's palace where he was arrested. He said all those who appeared before the Ezo panel were not arrested and wondered why anyone should speculate that the government reneged on its promise to forgive all repentant militants.

Ebi Papa's group, is alleged to be an affiliate of the Movement for the

Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). The arrest of the militant has been described as a big blow to MEND in the Eastern Niger Delta flank.

JTF spokesperson, Lt. Col. Sagr Musa, told *The Guardian* yesterday that the arrested militant was arrested at 8.30 p.m. at the King's palace following intelligence report that he was due to visit Buguma in company of the leader of the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteers Force, Alhaji Mujibul Deluke-Asari.

The Political adviser to

the monarch and the Action Congress governorship candidate, Tony Princewill, told *The Guardian* that Ebi Papa, had accompanied Asari to Buguma to seek forgiveness from the King and the entire community.

He explained that whereas the Local government and the traditional institutions in the area had granted amnesty to militant leaders operating in the area provided the renouance violence, the state government does not regard the concession.

24 years after. Ekiti

## ACROSS THE NATION

## NIGER DELTA

## X Militant groups clash in Bayelsa

**T**HE peace in Bayelsa creeks was threatened as about 200 persons were feared dead following a clash of two militant groups in the Southern Ijaw local government area of the state last weekend.

Information reaching the *Vanguard* from the area revealed that a clash of two militant groups was taking place when a militant group that have just returned from Port Harcourt in Rivers State stormed the venue of a burial ceremony in Opanama and his boys.

It was gathered that Igodo, who at his camp at Opanama while killing two of his men that sustained gun shot wounds to neighbouring Ekowe community in treatment, was attacked by assassins at the River.

The attack it was gathered led to the death of no fewer than two persons from Prince Igodo's

camp but that he managed to escape with bullet wounds into the swamp.

Meanwhile, the community is said to be deserted as the indigenes have fled to neighbouring communities for their dear lives as the second group has vowed to continue the onslaught until Igodo is brought down. Investigations revealed that trouble started when Igodo and his boys attempted to dislodge a new militant group from Rivers State from opening a camp in one of the swamps in the Southern-Ijaw LGA and in the process killing one person.

Since then, the new group was said to have vowed to revenge the attack on them by the Igodo camp. Contacted, the Joint Task-Force commander for Bayelsa State, Lt. Col. Chris Musa who confirmed the incident said he was still awaiting details.

## Militants attack JTF in bid to recover seized crude

**EMMA AMAIZE**

**G**UNMEN, weekend, attacked men of the Joint Task Force (JTF) on the Niger-Delta at two separate locations in Delta State in an audacious bid to recover barges loaded with stolen crude oil that were confiscated from oil bunkers by the military.

The first attack, according to information available to *Star-day Vanguard*, was targeted at the JTF troops that seized four barges at Alogwe creek, along Benin River. The military men who were securing the barges, three of which were loaded with stolen crude, repelled the offensive and injured some of the suspected militants, who fled the scene when they noticed the superior firepower of the soldiers.

It was also learnt that on Independence day, the gunmen launched another attack on the JTF operatives who they wanted to catch unawares, but the men were equal to the task. Confirming the attacks on the JTF troops, the coordinator of the Joint Media Campaign Centre (JMCC) in Warri, Lt. Col. Kabu Abubakar, said: "On Independence day, our troops arrested four barges at Alogwe creek along Benin River. Three of the barges were loaded with substance suspected to be crude oil, while one was empty. Troops securing the arrested barges were attacked by militants suspected to be operating from Okerenkoko. The attack was successfully repelled" without casualty on our side while the attackers escaped with injuries.

He went on: "While patriotic Nigerians were celebrating our 48th Independence anniversary, some suspected militants from Okerenkoko launched a second unprovoked attack in an attempt to release the barges. The attack was also successfully repelled."

Besides, the spokesman said, a barge towed by a wooden boat and eight persons suspected to be involved in the oil bunkering

Ogbududu creek in Delta State. "All those arrested together with the barges are in our custody and are undergoing investigation", Abubakar disclosed.

He, however, said, "Information available to us revealed that angered by the seizures and the botched attempts to retake the barges, militants are planning to attack our locations at Dibi, Oloro, Abibio and Escravos targeting oil installations and facilities".

The spokesman pointed out that the commander of the JTF, Brig Gen Naiven W. Rintip, had warned those planning the attack to desist in their own interest as such would amount to committing suicide because men of the task force have been placed on high alert. "The commander has vowed that they will pay a very

high price for their actions if they choose to go ahead with their planned attack, because our troops are at maximum alert to deter the planned attack", he said.

In another development, our troops on patrol recovered 130 vandalized (4inch) SPDC's pipes at Okowun village in Sapele. The vandals escaped through a nearby river on sighting own troops. Our operation against illegal bunkering is a continuous exercise and no amount of threat or violence will intimidate us as we are professionals in the act of management of violence".

Abubakar also debunked the allegation by some militants that the JTF carried a raid on their camp, saying the militants were losing relevance, as well-meaning citizens are tired of their so-called camp struggle.

## 6 Filipinos kidnapped in Rivers

• Briton, one other hostage freed

**JIMMIE OTONYUME**

**S**IX Filipinos were yesterday taken hostage in a vessel *MV Avero* off the coast of Bonny, Rivers State by some heavily armed men. When contacted, spokesman of the Joint Task Force, JTF, in the state, Lt. Col. Sagr Musa, said he had heard of the incident but had not been able to confirm it.

No group had claimed responsibility for the abduction. It was feared at press time that the captain of the vessel and two engineers were among those taken hostage.

"*MV Avero*, a vessel, was attacked this morning three nautical miles from Fairway Bay. Six crew, all Filipinos, were taken including the captain, two engineers, chief officer and two able bodied seamen," a source said

ransom, no ransom was secure the release", Mr. Meanwhile, at press time, hostages were reported to be three students of a private run by a wife of a former governor of Rivers State, been kidnapped. had told newsmen kidnapped two weeks ago at Eleme general area was released at 400hrs. Also Mrs. Paula Magani, wife of a NLNG staff, abducted on Monday, was released at about 200hrs today, in line with the standing policy of the JTF Operation Flush III, not to pay

Hostage-taking has attracted condemnation members of the society it has nothing to do with agitation for better life



## Police recover N359m, \$50,000, £2,000 from robbers in Rivers

By Jimlota Onoyume

**PORT HARCOURT** — THE Police in Rivers State, Tuesday night, recovered N359 million, \$50,000 and £2,000 from a gang of robbers who had earlier in the day

robbed a bullion van in neighbouring Imo State. Also recovered from the gang were assorted weapons. Also on Tuesday, men of the Joint Task Force (JTF) killed three militants in a gun battle at Abonema, Rivers State. A soldier died in the

encounter. Among the weapons seized from the robbers were a general purpose machine gun (GPMG), several magazines and bullets. The Rivers State Police Commissioner, Mr. Bada Hassan, confirmed the incident,

saying his command responded to a distress call from the Imo Police. As soon as the robbers succeeded in emptying the bullion van of its content — 16 bags loaded with money — they fled in the direction of

Continues on Page 5



## Cult clashes claim 5 lives in Benin

By Simon Ebegbulem

**BENIN**—MORE than ten persons have been reportedly killed in Benin, in the last one week, following a renewed cult clash between rival cult groups from different higher institutions in the state. Vanguard learnt that the war is between the Elye and the Black Axe Confraternities. It was said that the crisis started one week ago when a leader of one of the rival cult members was murdered around Ekenwa road. After the attack, Vanguard learnt that the second in command to the murdered leader was also attacked in a night club last weekend and was murdered after he tried to escape. Last Tuesday, some persons suspected to be members of rival cult groups engaged themselves in a shoot out in Ekokodin village, near the University of Benin (UNIBEN). It was learnt that three persons were shot dead in the fracas while

a 200 level Engineering student was seriously wounded and he is present receiving treatment at the intensive care of the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH). Vanguard further gathered that two students from yet to be identified school in the state, were shot dead along mission Thursday night, while two were also found dead in different parts of the state. Though the police in the state confirmed that four had been killed so far but Vanguard reliably gathered that over ten have been killed. Consisted, the state Police Public Relations Officer (PRO), ASP Peter Ogbu, disclosed that four persons so far been arrested over the killings. He expressed worries over the incident and explained that the police had infiltrated all the campuses in the state in order to bring all those behind the incident to book.

## Police smash woman lead robbery gang

By Austin Ogwudu

**ASABA**—MEN of the Delta police command have smashed a robbery gang led by a young woman, in Asaba which was described as very deadly, just as another woman was arrested for allegedly setting Ogbogonogo market on fire. The three-man robbery gang exchanged gunfire with police when confronted dur-

ing a robbery operation in Asaba. They were finally arrested with bulg/wounds and are presently helping the police in their investigations. Meanwhile, there was pan-demonium weekend following another fire incident at the old portion of the Ogbogonogo market, which was however averted by men of the Asaba Community Policing and the State Fire Service in prompt response to the distress call.

VANGUARD gathered that a woman who was fingered in connection with the fire was handed over to the police. An eyewitness told our reporter that the woman allegedly set the fire from her store in the market and disappeared.

## Police recover N359m, \$50,000, £2,000

Continued from Page 1

Rivers State. On getting to Ebers Omma in Etche Local Government Area of the state, the police engaged them in a gun battle said to have lasted some time. Two of the robbers were gunned down while two others were wounded. The rest realising that the police were gaining the upper hand, abandoned their loot and took to their heels. The police appealed to residents especially hospitals to report anyone carrying bullet wounds.

### Soldiers kill 3 militants in gun duel, lost patrol vehicle

Also on Tuesday, three militants and one soldier lost their lives in a gun battle that lasted several hours in Abonema.

Spokesman for the Joint Task Force in the state, Lieutenant Col Sagi Musa, said the army had one of its patrol vehicles damaged by the militants.

He said there was a battle for territorial control in the town between some militants that started at about 6 p.m. The JTF troops stationed at Buguma, another riverine community close to the centre of the battle, were alerted. And on their way to quell the situation, ran into an ambush

laid by one of the rampaging militant groups. In the ensuing gun battle, they lost a soldier while the militants lost three of their men.

He said the army had to reinforce its troops in Abonema to restore peace.

He said the militants freely detonated dynamites and other explosives, thus causing pandemonium and tension in the town. Vanguard gathered that residents fled the town yesterday in droves. But the army PRO said peace had returned.

"There was a serious militant clash in Abonema yesterday night (Tuesday) which led to massive disruption of social and economic activities. People scamped for dear lives. And there were sporadic heavy gun sounds. Some JTF troops stationed in Buguma were alerted. And they moved to address the situation. On their way they exchanged fire with the militants. We lost a soldier and three militants were killed. Our patrol vehicle was severely damaged. Reinforcement of troops was sent and situation was brought under control," he said.

He said they had not been able to link any of the cult and militant groups in the state with the clash. But sources close to militants and cult groups in the state feared boys led by Sobomo George could be involved.

## Police nab pipeline vandals in Benin

By Gabriel Engholase

**BENIN**—TWO middle-aged men who specialise in the sale of vandalised Pipeline Products and Marketing Company Plc (PPMPC) petroleum pipes have been arrested in Benin. Parading them before journalists in Benin yesterday, the Edo State chairman of Anti-Petroleum Pipelines Vandalisation Committee, Mr. Zakari Mohammed said the suspects, Uche Osakwe and Thompson Ibe were arrested by operatives of the State Security Service (SSS) who handed them over to the Committee for investigation.

A 1314 Mercedes Benz Truck with registration number EDO XA829EKP used for the transportation of vandalised pipelines by the suspects was also shown to newsmen. Mr. Zakari disclosed that upon investigation, it was discovered that oil pipelines belonging to the PPMPC, NPDC, Dabiri Oil and Pan Ocean Petroleum Company and supplying petroleum products to parts of the country were vandalised at Ekenwan creeks in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. The Anti-Petroleum Pipeline Vandalisation Committee

identified Uche Osakwe as the buyer of vandalised pipes while Thompson Ibe was the financier of Uche's underworld business.

He told newsmen that the suspects were arrested with one hundred pieces of vandalised pipes, which they claimed they bought from one Nwane in Aurugbene village in Ovia North East Local Government at the cost of N700,000.

However, one of the suspects, Uche Osakwe confessed to newsmen that he was not aware that the pipes were vandalised from pipelines conveying petroleum products.

# NEWS

## Kids march against kidnapping

Continued from Page 1

ers in the region always make necessary ransom a condition for freeing their victims.

The children in their hundreds moved from one street to the other until they arrived at the Government House, where they were received by the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Magnus Abo, on behalf of the governor. He assured them that the state government and security agencies were out to stop the menace.

Abo said: "What we are seeing today was not like

that before. When we were children, we did not have to come and carry placards for people not to kidnap us and for us to have led the society to such a situation where children like you have to carry placards to come to Government House to beg the governor for the sake of going to school in peace. I want to say on behalf of all of us, who are older than you, that we are sorry that we have put you in this situation and God will help us to put a stop to it."

He said the protesters of the state government

resolve to restore peace and security to the state and urged the parents and children to report any suspicious cases to the police in the state.

One of the children, Precious Okeke, appealed to the government to provide jobs for unemployed graduates in the state and also tackle social vices such as prostitution. She also appealed to those involved in kidnapping to release all the children in their custody and put an end to "this evil act".

They called on the Federal Government and security agencies to curb the nar-

sec. Chionna, representing Delta Constituency II and now in Australia for a capacity-building workshop with other members of the Rivers legislature, has not shown an indication that he would succumb to the demand.

His mother was abducted last Friday by six gunmen at the Oron State Universal Basic Education (UBE) Primary School located in D-Line area of Port Harcourt, where she is a teacher.

Assurance close to the House Leader, who pleaded anonymity, told The

Guardian that his younger brother was contacted over the weekend by the abductors of their mother, demanding the resignation of his brother.

"When we contacted the House Leader, he expressed shock that people could go and abduct his mother for political reasons. He said his mother was not a politician, hence it was absurd for anyone to abduct her and then turn to ask for his resignation," he said.

The source said the gunmen as at yesterday's crossing had not made any monetary demands because their motive appears to be political. He also explained that the lawmakers denied rumours that there was a scuffle among some members and principal officers of the House in Australia, which might have prompted the abduction of his mother.

Meanwhile, Energy Minister of State (Petroleum), Mr. Odun Akinmurehin (SAN), has said that because of the comprehensive approach of the present administration towards solving the Niger Delta problem, the Niger Delta region is the most peaceful of the area and other Nigerians might need to exercise patience with the government.

Speaking with the leadership of the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) led by its President, Mr. Peter Akpan, in Abuja, the minister said because of the neglect of the area in more than five decades, it had become difficult for the government to solve the problems within a short period.

Continued on Page 4

## Kids, mothers march against kidnapping

Gunmen ask Rivers' lawmaker to quit before mother's release

**CHILDREN** and mothers in Rivers State yesterday ignored the growing insecurity in the state to protest against their orphans in the hands of gunmen.

With placards of various inscriptions, the

Government House in Port Harcourt, where they told Governor Rotimi Amaechi that gunmen had made life unbearable for them. They complained that they had become pawns in the hands of bandits

and extortionists and could not freely move about in the state. Their schools, the children added, have become the targets of hostage-takers, who abduct them at will.

A twist has, however, been added to the growing case of kidnapping

in the Niger Delta. At the weekend, those who took hostage Mrs. Fidele Chionna, mother of the Leader of the Rivers State House of Assembly, Golden Ngoni Chionna, demanded the lawmaker's resignation for her release. Prior to this, hostage-tak-

Continued on Page 3

## Niger Delta Crisis A Nightmare, Says Yar'Adua

From Saxeo Akhaine (Kaduna)

**PRESIDENT Umaru Musa Yar'Adua** has expressed disappointment in the lingering crisis in the Niger Delta, describing it as a night-

mare to his administration. He said the situation in the oil-rich region has not only become a major concern to the administration, but also posed a serious threat to the economy of the country

and staring away investors in the region. Said he: "The Niger Delta situation continues to be a major concern facing this government. While acknowledging the challenges facing the people of the

Niger Delta, we must not allow the activities of a few criminal minds to cloud a permanent state of insecurity. In the region, destroy the economy and scare away investors."

who made the assertion in Kaduna at the weekend on the occasion of the Pasting Out Parade (POP) of the officer cadets of the 60th Regular Course of the Nigerian Defence Academy.

Continued on Page 4

## laring

status of law enforcement before the Land Use Act is reformed to and where that is not immediately feasible, land used for petroleum activities be converted as equity contribution as compensation.

Concerning the withheld NNPC funds, it was resolved that the Federal Government should not only release the money but that further steps should be taken to amend the NNPC Act to deal with constraints in funding and to specially include all companies involved in all aspects of oil and gas enterprises within the funding arrangement and with appropriate sanctions against defaulting companies.

The conference recommended that government should ensure that oil companies be held responsible for every negative impact of all their operations in the region in accordance with the polluter pays principle.

The government was urged to make adequate laws governing corporate social responsibility. A proposal was made for the establishment of a Niger Delta Finance Corporation to primarily fund infrastructural and entrepreneurial development in the region.

Government was also urged to place more emphasis on human capital development in the region.

The sincerity of the government of the nine oil-producing states, according to the conference, is crucial in achieving the development aspirations of their people.

## 'Niger Delta Crisis A Nightmare'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 Academy (NDA), stressed that the government would ensure that the circumstances were adequately addressed.

In the interim, the President has commended the support, patience and perseverance of Nigerians since the 2007 elections.

"This is a true testimony of our resilience when compared with similar events in some of our sister African countries. I believe that the report of the Electoral Reform Panel will assist us to remedy the imperfections in our electoral process and strengthen our democracy," he enthused.

Represented by Vice President Goodluck

Jonathan, he commended the Armed Forces for their roles in international peace operations worldwide, as well as the aid to civil authority during internal security operations in different parts of the country. Accordingly, he pledged that the government would continue to meet the legitimate needs of the Armed Forces within the limits of available resources and spare no effort towards ensuring viable and truly professional Armed Forces in the country.

This involves the provision of necessary legis-

lating with greater vigour the outgoing training and returning efforts," he said.

The president called on them to remain faithful to their oath of allegiance and avoid acts that might endanger democracy in particular and the nation in general.

"The Military is a beacon of hope that with right leadership, we will achieve the overall objective of the Forces," he said.

The premier military academy, since its inception in 1964, has produced 14,665 officers, including 447 officers from other African countries.

## Presidency, Senate Begin

Continued from Page 1

the petroleum sector.

## Children protest spate of kidnappings in Rivers

More than 300 children in Port Harcourt yesterday protested the rising incidents of kidnapping in Rivers State, and therefore challenged the state government to find a lasting solution to the problem.

The children, carrying placards and accompanied by their parents, marched to the Government House, Port Harcourt, where they were received by the secretary to the state government, Mr. Magnus Abe.

In presenting their grievances to government, the children expressed fears that the security of their peers was no longer guaranteed in the state, unless the rate of kidnappings was reduced.

But the secretary to the state government, Magnus Abe assured the children that the state government is doing everything possible to stop menace in the state, noting that the children and their parents also have a role to play in the process.

Some of the children, who spoke to journalists during the protest march, noted that the youths in the state would not engage in kidnapping if government provides job opportunities for them.

From Henry Omuu, Port Harcourt

One of the protesting children, Precious Obasi, said children in the state opted to visit the Government House to seek peace and to appeal to the state governor to urgently address the wave of kidnapping being faced by

children and women.

"We are appealing to the governor to put an end to kidnapping, that he should provide schools and job opportunities for the drop-outs. He should provide job opportunities for graduates that don't have jobs."

"He should also put an end to prostitution; some

children now drop out of school and go for prostitution. He should also put an end to child abuse," Obasi said.

Responding, Abe apologized to the children for the panic situation they have found themselves, and blamed the adults in the society for the present woes prevalent in society.

## Gunmen kidnap two toddlers in Rivers State

TWO kids, Deborah and Francis Uduak, children of an executive officer of the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association, Mr. Sunday Uduak, have been kidnapped.

Their captors are demanding N10 million as ransom. Besides, five days after their kidnap, the whereabouts of Mrs. Patricia Asita, wife of the lawmaker representing Ogburn/Ndoni-Akpa West Federal Constituency, Mr. Asita

and 11-year-old Chidi Nzerim, who were abducted in two separate attacks by hoodlums in Port Harcourt on Sunday remain unknown.

The Rivers State police Spokesperson, Mrs. Reju Barasa, told *The Guardian* that Deborah (5) and Francis Uduak (3) were kidnapped by unknown gunmen from their home at Iketo Eleme in the early hours of yesterday.

The *Guardian* learnt from security sources

From Kelvin Ediri and RoseAnn Chikereuba, Port Harcourt

that the handits had gone to Uduak's home probably to rob him because immediately they gained access to the house, the gunmen demanded money.

But when the money demanded was not forthcoming, the gunmen decided to kidnap the children despite a passionate plea by their parents. According to sources, the gunmen

were infuriated by Uduak's claim that he did not have money.

Efforts to reach the father of the children proved abortive. The motive behind the kidnap is yet to be ascertained. Barasa said the police were investigating the matter.

Security agents in Rivers State are yet to locate the whereabouts of Mrs. Asita and Chidi, who were seized in separate attacks by hoodlums in Port Harcourt on Sunday.

When *The Guardian* contacted Asita, he said the kidnappers of his wife were still demanding N50 million as ransom.

Sources close to Chidi's parents said his kidnappers had threatened to kill him if his parents disclosed their interaction with them to reporters. The threat has made the boy's father, Mr. Chidi Nzerim, Managing Director of an oil and gas firm, DMS Limited, located at Onne Oil and Gas Free Zone,

to decline being interviewed by reporters.

Chidi was kidnapped when his mother went to drop him off at Brookstone International School, Igarwute-Ali on Sunday. The gunmen shot his mother on the leg and killed the driver of the car conveying him to school and a police escort attached to him.

Meanwhile, spokesperson of the Joint Task Force, Lt. Sagie Musa, has urged all kidnappers to have a rethink.

He said security agents in the state were working hard to ensure the release of Mrs. Asita and Chidi.

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## Gunmen kidnap Delta SSG's father

THE 70-year-old father of the Secretary to the Delta State Government, Chief Arthur Okowa, was yesterday kidnapped by four gunmen from his home in Baji-Boj Owa, in North East Council, his son, Dr. Henry Okowa, is the chief of staff to the State Government.

A family source explained that the gunmen stormed the older Okowa's residence at Amokwa Street, off Ebeizemor road at about 11 a.m. when most of neighbours had gone to church.

The source disclosed that the septuagenarian had just returned from an early morning church service at the local Anglican Church at about 10:30 a.m.

and was resting in his bedroom when a housemaid informed him that some visitors had come to see him.

Okowa, the Ojwangbe of Owa, told the maid to let in the mysterious visitors who were said to be carrying some Ghana-Afust-Go bags.

As soon as the old man came out of his bedroom, the four-man gang reportedly pulled out guns. He was told to cooperate with them to avoid being harmed.

The gunmen were sighted by some neighbours as they patrolled the neighbourhood waiting for their target to return home. They immediately shot him and

From  
Hendrix Okonaghe  
(Asaba) and Willie Ekan  
(Yenagoa)

tapped his mouth when they confronted him.

It was learnt that the house help was also bound hands and feet before being locked up in one of the bedrooms in the house, to make for an easy escape. Okowa was subsequently led quietly into his Operus Hyundai executive saloon car, with instruction

"Ojwangbe" on the number plate, and whisked away. At the family home, some relations of the kidnapped Okowa were mournful looks, while others engaged themselves in a frenzied

prayer session, calling for God's intervention. Some politicians, Owa royal chiefs and friends were seen milling around discussing in low voices.

Delta State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Joseph Odioneme, contacted on telephone, would neither deny nor confirm the story but simply said, "I have not been told, I am going to call the area command for further confirmation."

But the state Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Charles Mafa, confirmed the incident. "We have just received a signal that somebody has been kidnapped in Baji-Boj Owa," he said, but

advised that The Guardian should speak with the state Commissioner of Police for details.

The Divisional Police Officer in charge of Owa, "Oyika, Police Post, in the North East Council, Mr. Stephen Musa, disclosed that his command had been informed of the development and that he had sent his gunners to comb the area for clues in the crime.

According to Musa, Okowa's car was found on Agbor-Uromi Road junction without its occupants. Ruling the speculation that the kidnappers may have escaped in another car.

Delta State Police Commissioner Mr. Jacob Oshiomoghe had visited his Command to assess the situation and was always in close contact to monitor events. Musa added that Mr. Donald Ughala, a former Deputy Inspector General of Police and an indigene of Owa Kingdom, was also on the team that recovered the abandoned car.

Meanwhile, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) has said that it will intervene in the release of the two German workers of Julius Berger who were abducted and kidnapped in Rivers State on July 19, 2008.

## Bayelsa SSG's wife narrates ordeal with kidnappers

Mrs. Augusta Ekeuei, wife of the Secretary to the Bayelsa State Government, yesterday narrated her 17-day ordeal in the hands of kidnappers in the state.

"She said yesterday in Yenagoa that she was picked up at Daxa Family Church, Port Harcourt, during Sunday school service on June 1.

"I was with some children when the armed men suddenly appeared and abducted me into their get-away vehicle," she told the congregation at a thanksgiving service.

Ekeuei said the incident occurred shortly after she had just finished breast feeding her baby. "I was blindfolded inside the bus.

They said madam pray oh! If any of us dies in this process, we will kill you," she added.

She said she was moved from the bus to a smaller car in a bush, before they finally

settled in an uncompleted building, where the kidnappers collected her husband's telephone number from her to call him.

The kidnappers, she added, soaked indomie inside hot water for her to eat but that she pleaded with them to buy her a loaf of bread and bottled water, because the indomie was tasteless.

Ekeuei said she urinated and defecated where she was confined by her captors, adding that she also had her first menstruation after the delivery of her baby right there.

"There, I was under rain and sun, and they even drew a line for me not to cross, but I kept praying and preaching the Bible. They would listen, and smoke Indian hemp," she said.

Ekeuei said on the 16th day of her abduction, one of her captors claimed that he was a student of the Rivers State University of Science

and Technology (UST).

He said he was tired of being in the camp, and would want to go back for his lectures.

"He said he was lured into the act just because he needed someone that would pay his school fees, which I promised to do for him, provided he dropped his guns," she said.

Ekeuei said on the 17th day, she was rescued by security operatives, who shot dead the six kidnappers who

were around her during the invasion.

In her testimony, Mr. Gbureke Ekeuei, the husband of the victim, urged Nigerians to trust in God.

"My wife was rescued from her captives by God," he said.

In his sermon, the General Overseer of Daxa Family Church, Rev. Tuesday Emmanuel, expressed regrets at the spate of kidnapping in the Niger Delta region (NAN).

## ACROSS THE NATION

## NIGER-DELTA

## MOSOP condemns oil blocks allocations

... without reference to land owners

By Samuel Oyadongha

**P**ORT HARCOURT—PRESIDENT of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Mr. Ledum Mitee, has described as unacceptable the current practice of sharing peoples' ancestral lands, farmlands and backyards from Abuja in the name of oil blocs' allocation, without reference to the owners of the land.

Mitee, in an interview, described the practice as a travesty of justice which could best be compared to the colonial sharing of African territories at the notorious Berlin Conference.

Lamenting the plight of the oil and gas rich but underdeveloped Niger Delta, the MOSOP leader described as unacceptably discriminatory and unjustifiable, the anomalous situation in the country's law which permits a tri-parite arrangement between the governments, the company and the local community in the case of solid minerals whilst appropriating everything including people's lands in the case of oil and gas.

According to him, "issue of resource control itself must change significantly from a

perception only in terms of derivation to bring about a genuine feeling of ownership or a major stake in the industry for local communities.

"The current practice of sharing peoples' ancestral lands, farmlands and backyards from Abuja in the name of oil blocs' allocation, without reference to the owners of the land is completely unacceptable and is a parody of justice which resembles the colonial situation our laws which permit a tri-parite arrangement between the government, the company and the local community, in the case of solid minerals whilst appropriating everything including the lands of people in the case of oil and gas, is unacceptably discriminatory and unjustifiable."

The need to achieve community control and involvement in the resources of their land without unduly damaging the interest of the rest of the country, he said, could be achieved by exploiting a progressive change which takes advantage of pending increases in oil production and or the very significant gap between oil prices and budgeted receipts.

## Calabar monarch tussle takes new turn

By John Ighodaro

**C**ALABAR—THE lingering kingship tussle in Calabar that culminated in the crowning of Edidem Bassey Ekpo Bassey II as Obong of Calabar, Sunday has taken a fresh turn as another faction which describes itself as "The Etubom's Conclave of the Palace of the Obong of Calabar" has declared another man as the Obong of Calabar.

A release issued by the Conclave and jointly signed by the Chairman of the Etubom's conclave, Etubom Okon Etim Asuquo III and Secretary, Etubom Micah Archibong VI in Calabar noted the proclamation of "the Head of Adirabo Ikot Mbo Otu House, Western Calabar, Etubom Ekpo Okon Abasi-Out as Obong of Calabar."

The Conclave further noted the proclamation followed the passing away of Edidem (Prof.) Elijah Henshaw VI.

They declared that the new Obong of Calabar will be crowned and addressed as His Eminence, Edidem Ekpo Okon Abasi Out V, adding "the

Conclave shall announce the date for the various traditional ceremonies in due course."

It will be recalled that Etubom Bassey Ekpo Bassey was crowned as Edidem Bassey Ekpo Bassey II on Sunday at the Efik's traditional shrine.

In a statement in Calabar, the Mkpiaong Ukara Ekondo Efik, Dr. Ambrose Akpanika noted that it is "no news that succession to the throne of the Obong of Calabar has been plunged with a history of controversies over the years".

Continuing, he said, "this seemingly traditional controversy is, not unexpectedly, consequent upon institutional inadequacies and contradictions generated by empty and unfounded aristocratic claims to royalty and consistent arrogant and criminal consignment of distinguished personages of the Efik Kingdom to the undignified precincts of slaves, even in the 21st century, in a rather plural and politically informed society built by our forefathers as captured in the World History of civilization."

# JTF Nabs 14 Filipinos, Greek In Major Oil Bunkering

Continued from page 1

were said to have jumped into the sea to escape arrest.

It was gathered that the JTF, using two gun boats, blocked and subsequently confiscated the vessel on the high sea somewhere close to the Brass local government area of Bayelsa State while it was trying to sail out of the nation's territorial waters. The crew members were promptly detained by the JTF men when they could not satisfactorily explain the source of their cargo.

LEADERSHIP Sunday gathered that the suspects had struck an illicit business deal with their Nigerian partners-in-crime prior to taking off from Greece in June, while the vessel was said to have berthed in Togo for several days before its voyage into the Nigerian waterway.

The MT Lina Panama crew, who were said to have resisted security scrutiny before finally succumbing, reportedly loaded the vessel from some oil fields in Bayelsa State enroute to Greece. The vessel and the suspects were later ordered

to be brought to Delta Ports in Warri, Delta State, by the commander of the JTF, Brig. Gen. Wuyep Rintip.

Confirming the major arrest, Rintip said

it was a testimony to the effort of the task force in curbing oil bunkering in the nation's oil region. He disclosed that the suspects would be transferred to Abuja for

further interrogation. The suspects reportedly arrived Warri at 5.30pm, Friday, and were driven to 93 Battalion Effurun, where the drilling took off.

## 3 NATION

## NIGER-DELTA

### N-Delta summit, another ploy to waste money—IYC

By Jinitola Onoyume

**PORT HARCOURT**—THE EASTERN zone of the Ijaw Youth Council have dissociated themselves from the proposed summit on the Niger Delta with Professor Ibrahim Gambari as chairman.

In a statement issued yesterday in Port Harcourt and signed by Chairman of the body, General Atile Horsefall, they said the summit was another ploy to waste money generated from the region. They continued that the lasting solution to the problem of the region was for government to show genuine commitment and sincerity to develop the area.

"That the twin problem of youth restiveness and underdevelopment bedeviling the region is a creation of the government and only sincerity of purpose on the part of government can solve the problem. As no commission or committee was formed to develop

chiefs like Lagos and Abuja." Continuing, the statement also called for open trial for detained MEND leader, Henry Okah, saying the decision to try him in secret was partly responsible for the current atmosphere of tension in the region. They said the federal government should not hesitate to release him if they have no substantial evidence

against him.

"It appears that the President Yar Adua and VP Goodluck Jonathan led federal government are not transparent in handling of the Henry Okah's prosecution. We insist that he be tried in an open court and if the government does not have any substantial evidence against him, he should be released unconditionally instead of manipulating the judiciary. His continued detention is polarizing the already tense security situation in the region.

On Rivers state, the group

said what the people need the moment was an apology from governor Rosini Amaechi. They said it would be unfair to humanity for the go-down to create the picture that he was not part of the crisis that rocked the state when he was speaker of state house of assembly. "If the governor is sincere, he would have openly apologized to the people of the state for his knowledge and involvement in the entire crisis that engulfed the state during his tenure as speaker of the state assembly."



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## Why Niger Delta Summit must hold



By AbdulFattah Olatide, Tashikalmah Hallah & Francis Okeke

Against the background of the scepticism being expressed over the proposed Niger Delta Summit, President Umaru Musa Yar'adua yesterday reaffirmed that the summit would not be another "pointless and diversionary jamboree, as some fear."

Restating his commitment to the summit, Yar'adua described it "as a critical first step and take-off point for the implementation of his administration's agenda for peace and rapid socio-economic development in the region."

A statement issued by the Special Adviser on Communication to the President, Mr. Olusegun Adeniyi, said President Yar'adua "is fully committed to doing everything possible to ensure that it yields positive dividends for peace, security and long overdue progress in the Niger-Delta."

In recent times, the proposed summit has been dogged by many controversies ranging from its desirability (in view of many existing committee reports on the solutions to the Niger Delta

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## Why Niger Delta Summit must hold

**Continued from Page 1**  
crisis) to the appointment of its chairman. Only last weekend, Niger Delta elders rejected government's proposal to appoint Professor Ibrahim Gambari as the summit's chairman.

Other stakeholders have also said that the summit is uncalled for since there have been many earlier recommendations on the Niger Delta.

According to Adeniyi, President Yar'adua believes that peace and security are essential preconditions for meaningful development of the region. "One of the primary objectives of the stakeholders summit is to evolve an across the board consensus and commitment from all concerned parties to end the incessant violence in the region and engender a much more conducive atmosphere for the massive improvement of infrastructure and social services in the region."

"Once the summit has held and achieved its key objective of getting all stakeholders to buy-in to the Yar'adua administration's agenda for the region and guarantee the creation of the right conditions of peace and security for the rapid execution of the agenda, the Federal Government will move very quickly to begin the faithful implementation of the Niger Delta Development Master Plan", he stated.

The President also said "the summit is necessary to obtain a firm and binding commitment from all stakeholders to stop all acts of violence and criminality which have unfortunately turned the Niger-Delta into a no-go area for many of the construction companies and contractors whose services are required for provision of essential amenities in the region."

He said most of the contractors mobilized to sites in the Niger Delta after he assumed office last year, have abandoned their projects because of insecurity and threats of violence in the area. "The continual disruption of work by armed gangs, kidnappings of expatriate personnel and family members for ransom as well as the necessity and cost of provid-

ing high level security cover for workers, sometimes involving deployment of troops, have today driven up the cost of executing projects in the Niger Delta by about 300 per cent with no guarantee of completion", he added.

Under these circumstances, the president said he considered it absolutely necessary to engage all stakeholders in the region in meaningful and purposeful dialogue aimed at removing fundamental obstacles to the implementation of his administration's plans for Niger-Delta.

He said the urgent resolution of the developmental challenges of the Niger Delta remains a very critical element of his administration's seven-point agenda. He added that much thought and effort have already gone into the conception and planning of the summit.

Meanwhile, Speaker of the House of Representatives Dimeji Bankole has

said that the House would continue to support the Federal Government through the enactment of relevant laws that would guarantee enduring peace, security and development in the Niger Delta.

A statement by his Special Adviser on Media Affairs, Kayode Akinmade said the Speaker made the pledge while receiving members of the National Working Committee of the Petroleum and National Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) in his office. Bankole said the problem in the Niger Delta region has assumed global dimensions, adding that every stakeholder in Nigeria must join hands in finding a lasting solution to it.

"The issue of Niger Delta is no longer a South-South issue; it is not only a Nigeria issue but a global issue. It has also attracted the attention of all and sundry and we must collectively work to find solution to it," he said.

## Thugs invade Oredo LG secretariat

By Simon Ebegbulem

**BENIN**—PANDEMONIUM broke out yesterday at the Oredo Local Government Council secretariat of Edo State, after scores of thugs invaded the council, beat up the Leader of the legislative arm, Mr. Foster Iyangbe and vandalised his office.

Mr. Iyangbe who was half-naked when newsmen arrived the secretariat, accused the Chairman of the Council, Mr. Nosa Ehima of masterminding the attack because the lawmakers ordered him to appear before it and explain the income and expenditure of the council since January this year.

*Vanguard* observed that the office of the Leader was in shambles while broken bottles littered every where.

But in a swift reaction, the Council boss denied the allegation, saying that the lawmakers declared war on his administration because he refused to honour what he described as their "unreasonable requests," which according to him included a demand of N1.7 million monthly, to run their legislative duties as against the N700,000 which was being given to them.

Narrating his ordeal to news-

men, Mr. Iyangbe said:

"We noticed that the Chairman has not been prudent in the management of the funds of the Council, so we invited him to come and appear before us to explain how he managed the income and expenditure of the council since January. As we sat for the day's proceedings, the Chairman and the Special Adviser to the Council, Mr. Abu stormed the place with over one hundred thugs and started beating me. The camera we use in recording our daily proceedings was seized. They destroyed my office and tore my cloths."

But on his part, Mr. Ehima asserted that "my mandate is not to obey the unreasonable demands of a few but to serve the people. For quite some time now they have been inviting the leadership of the Council to come and explain one thing or the other. They requested that I should give them N2.5 million for furniture allowance. I had to borrow money to ensure that they got the money."

"They came again to say I should increase their monthly imprest from N700,000 to N1.7 million. I met the Governor over the matter and he said I should give them N1 million but

they still refused. Now they asked me to appear before them, I went there and after waiting for them for over thirty minutes because I needed to rush out to inspect some of the projects the Governor will be coming to commission tomorrow, I went inside and discovered that they were only three of them inside."

"So I told them that they were not ready so why are they wasting my time. So I left them but they started arguing with the Special Adviser to the Council and I do not really know how they started the fight. So its unfortunate, I never asked any body to beat him, that is cheap blackmail," he stated.

## Ogulagha youths chase Agip workers from flow station

By Emma Ainalze

**WARRI**—SOME youths from Ogulagha community in Burutu Local Government Area of Delta State invaded the Beniboye Flow Station, operated by the National Agip Oil Company (NAOC) and chased away the workers from the oil installation.

*Vanguard* learnt that the youths occupied the flow station after sacking the workers.

A source who distanced militants from the incursion said it was purely a protest action by Ogulagha youths, working for a contractor to the company. Their complaint is that the company has refused to give them permanent jobs. They want to be given full employment, not working for a contractor to the company.

A member of the Delta Waterways Security Committee (DWSC), Chief Second Benikukru is already talking to the protesting youths who vowed not to leave the oil facility until Agip offers them permanent jobs.

The traditional ruler of

Ogulagha, Captain Joseph Timiyau who rushed to Ogulagha yesterday over the matter told *Vanguard* that the disagreement was over employment.

He said that the workers from Ogulagha were asking for permanent employment, adding that he had already spoken to the Agip and the youths on how to resolve the matter.

It was learnt that the Agip had already conceded to take the youths for training in Asaba before their employment would be formalised but the youths, insisting they have been enslaved for many years, demanded that they should be given employment before any programme in Asaba.

Before the February 5 invasion, the representatives of the Agip, Odimodi and Ogulagha communities met with the Committee on Environment of the Delta State House of Assembly on the pending issues of environmental pollution and clean up.

It was agreed at the meeting that a Joint Inspection Visit (JIV), comprising the communities, Agip and other relevant agencies would be

undertaken on March 12 while clean up would commence from April 13 or thereafter.

**N's performance in your area under th**  
 xt to: 08082340885 or e-mail: editor@vanguardngr.com for pu

## Kids watch as bandits kill parents in Edo

**PERSONS** suspected to be assassins yesterday struck at the Bendel Development Planning Authority (BDPA) Estate, House No. 4, Orakodigbo Street, off Adolor College Road, Benin City, killing a couple identified as Mr. and Mrs. Irevbie Osawaru.

The victims were employees of the University of Benin Teaching

(UBTH). Also, the late Osawaru's wife was a pharmacist while the husband was an accountant in the Internal Audit Department of the hospital and branch Secretary of the Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU).

The incident occurred at 3a.m. in the presence of their children, a source said.

It was learnt that the bandits first killed Mrs.

From  
 Alia Alenosa-Osawaru,  
 Benin City

Osawaru in her sleep, before taking up her husband. They did not remove anything from the house.

UBTH Public Relations Officer, Mrs. Kehinde Ibitoye, who confirmed the incident, said that the couple came to work last weekend. Ibitoye, who

could not hold back her tears, described the couple as hardworking and well-respected employees. The Osawarus, who were said to have been married in 2000, have four children with the eldest in primary one.

The state Police Commissioner, Mr. Chris Dega, also confirmed the murder of the Osawarus but added that he was yet to get details on it. The

Divisional Police Officer (DPO) in the Ugbowo, who is in charge of the matter, promised to speak on the matter today.

A neighbour said: "We heard gunshot twice at about 3a.m. We heard them screaming and shouting. They were shouting and calling a doctor in the next compound for rescue. And when the doctor came, they had gone."

"The doctor came to knock on my gate and when we got to their flat, we saw them lying on the floor. When the doctor was taking them to UBTH, he met some men of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) on the way and they went together."

Meanwhile, the victims' children have been relocated to a family member's house somewhere in the city.

## Clark gives condition for N-Delta talks with FG

\*Appeals to MEND not to resume hostilities

EMMANUEL UDOAGHAN

**F**ORMER Federal Commissioner for Information, Chief Edwin Clark, says the Niger-Delta will consent to hold talks with the Federal Government on the Niger-Delta, but, not an all Nigerian Summit, only after a technical committee had reviewed all the earlier reports, dating back to 1958, submitted to the government, and come out with a coordinated position that will be endorsed by the people at a regional conference.

Clark, who revealed the new position to *Sunday Vanguard*, in an interview, yesterday, appealed to the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger-Delta (MEND), which called off the ceasefire it declared a little over two weeks ago, not to resume further hostilities in the name of God to enable the elders and leaders of the region continue with their negotiation with the government on the way out of the crisis.

He recalled that the people of the south-south walked out of the National Political Reform Conference (NPRC), which was a Nigerian Summit in 2005 and vowed not to come back to any such summit, saying that the decision had not changed and urged the government to respect the decision of the people not to attend a Nigerian Summit. To the MEND, he reiterated, "They should still give us time, there will be no development if there is no peace, we need peace to carry on with our negotiations with the government and I am sure we will not fail; they should continue to listen to us and trust in the capacity of the MEND who convinced the group received Clark's message, said, 'Turnout in a position to tell you our reaction, you will hear from the hierarchy of the group later'."

The few nationalist leaders

quickly clarified, on the summit "For the avoidance of doubt, I am not saying that we are shifting our position. I only said that we will meet with the Federal Government, the oil companies, security agencies and other stakeholders, not in the kind of all Nigerian Summit that the Federal Government is proposing, but, at a conference of the region after a technical committee had reviewed all the reports on the Niger-Delta, harmonized them and come up with the immediate, short term and long term measures that the Federal Government and other relevant bodies should embark upon. At the meeting, they can now tell us how they want to do them; we will then deliberate and agree."

"We have been in Abuja discussing with the Federal Government on the problem of the Niger-Delta, withdrawal of Prof Ibrahim Gambari and the way forward, which is that all the reports from 1958 till date be implemented, after a technical committee would have reviewed the various reports, our position still remains that there is no need for a summit, as all Nigerian Summits like what the Federal Government has proposed. It should not even be called a summit because that is not what it is. Summit was introduced by a Russian Head of State when he met with his American counterparts, years ago."

Pointing out that the word, summit, is more apt for meetings between countries, he said, "Nigeria is not in a state of war to demand a summit, what they should be talking about in the Niger-Delta is a regional conference of the Niger-Delta people, the Federal Government, oil companies, security agencies and other necessary parties". Clark said the expectation of the Niger-Delta people is that the Federal Government must take the agreement that would be reached at a meeting to the National Assembly for approval

of funds because we know that money would be required to execute the projects and they were not provided for in the 2008 budget.

He explained that the leaders of the Niger-Delta would not be able to negotiate and secure the understanding of the government if the freedom fighters do not keep to their ceasefire agreement, adding that they should not be provoked by the report that the British government was going to provide military support for the government to attack Niger-Delta and that he was convinced Deltaans and that he was convinced Deltaans would not do anything like that. On the statement by the Arewa

Consultative Forum (ACF), he said the people of the Niger-Delta should be focused and not allow some northerners who know that the North was not contributing anything as it now to the distributable pool to distract them, pointing out that in the last constitutional conference, it was discovered that while the south-east contribute 2.3 per cent, south-west 3.5 per cent, N-Delta 90 per cent and receives only 17 per cent, the north contributes nothing to the pool.

He said it was an insult for the North to be challenging the propriety of the allocations to the Niger-Delta when it got 50 per cent derivation during its time. Clark also asserted, "If our governors are corrupt, that is not a reason for the Federal Government not to perform its obligations in the region. Was it not a governor from the north that was said to have donated N10 billion to the Obasanjo aborted third term bid, the north is also corrupt, their governors would do worse under such a situation."

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## Delta-North leaders fault relocation of NYSC camp to Oghara

**THIS** last may not have been heard of the controversial relocation of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) orientation camp from Isale-Uku in Aniocha North Council of Delta State to Oghara by the former governor, James Ibori.

A statement issued at the end of a meeting of the Delta-North Leaders' Forum lamented that the camp, the site of a foremost teachers' training college, was transferred by Ibori to Oghara, his home-town, three weeks to the expiration of his tenure last May.

Jointly signed by the group chairman, Senator Nwankwo Ikpo and the secretary-general, Azuka Osakwe, the statement disclosed that the move, which was meant for the development of the Isale-Uku camp was being used by incumbent Governor Emmanuel Udoaghan to develop the new site at Oghara. This is in spite of the protest by Isale-Uku community.

The chairman recalled that a meeting between him and Udoaghan's political association, the O3, during the governorship campaigns for the last April election, he (Udoaghan) had acknowledged the marginalisation of Delta-North, particularly the absence of government's presence, promising to right all the wrongs if

From Hendrix Oluomogbe, Asaba elected.

"We are, therefore, surprised that his government will overtly promote the continued marginalisation of the district by endorsing the ignominious act of the past regime and authorising the development of the Oghara camp site instead of taking after the bold and honourable steps of President Umaru Yar'Adua who has virtually reversed all unwholesome decisions of the past government".

The forum said the state government should rescind its decision on the transfer and stop any further development at the Oghara site.

It cautioned that the leaders would take appropriate actions based on equity and the rule of law if the government failed to relocate the camp to its original site in Isale-Uku.

## Zamfara spends N13 billion on roads

**Z**AMFARA governor Zulum has expended over N13 billion on the construction of 500-kilometre roads across the state, according to Special Adviser to the State Governor on Public Enlightenment, Alhaji Jakani Bittin Tudu.

Speaking with journalists yesterday in Gusau, Tudu explained that the road contracts were awarded to various reputable construction companies in the country to ensure quality work and to overcome the transportation problem that is facing most of the rural communities in the state.

"It is well known fact that transportation plays a very vital role for economic development and growth of any government that is committed to improving the living standard of its electorate", said Tudu.

According to him, most

From Isah Ibrahim, Gusau

of the road projects being carried out by the current administration have already been completed while the rest have reached 75 per cent stage of completion.

He said plans were underway by the government to construct 28 motorized boreholes across the state. Tudu added that two boreholes are to be constructed in each of the 14 local councils of the state while all the existing ones will be rehabilitated before the end of this year.

The governor's aide disclosed that the government had also awarded contracts for the construction of 30 earth dams for irrigation activities in the state, adding that as soon as the projects are completed, the perennial water shortage in both urban and rural areas of the state would be solved.



## Group Expresses Lack Of Confidence In NDDC

FROM JOSEPH ANACROSO, PORT-HARCOURT

A Non-governmental Organisation (NGO) tracking development in the Niger Delta says it lacks confidence in the capacity of the Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to meet the

expectations of the people of the region.

Mr George-Hill Anthony, national coordinator of the Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group (NDBMG), told journalists in Port-Harcourt at the weekend that patronage was a major problem of the Commission.

"I have serious reservations about the activities of the NDDC, because I don't think that the Commission is accountable to our Niger Delta people."

The NDDC has not delivered, because the people putting pressures on the commission are

taking the money away either through legitimate and illegitimate means," he said.

He expressed worry that the people of the oil rich region were not consulted on the amount of money released to the NDDC in the past years.

He argued that there was confusion on the activities of the NDDC and the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority, saying that such a situation compromised the basic elements of transparency and accountability.

On the 2008 budget proposal by

the federal government, Mr. Anthony said it was deceptive as far as the Niger Delta region was concerned.

"As far as we know, the N444 billion allocated to the Niger Delta in the budget is actually meant for arms and ammunition, and our National Assembly members clapped for the residents," he said.

Anthony also said that his organisation was involved in the training of local government officials in the region on basic aspects of transparency and accountability.

## Youths 'll disrupt proposed gas pipeline to Lagos unless..., IDA warns

By Emma Amaize

WARRI—CHAIRMAN of the Iwere Development Association (IDA), an Isekiri group in Warri, Delta State, Comrade Opolubi Newswini, yesterday, warned that the youths of the Niger-Delta would disrupt the proposed gas plant pipeline from any of

the Niger-Delta States to Lagos by the Federal Government, describing the plot to alter the national master gas plan as a sheer madness by government to further marginalise the people of the region.

Onolubi who spoke to Vanguard on the contentious scheme advised President Umaru Yar'Adua that if govern-

ment wants to lay pipe from the Niger-Delta to Lagos it must meet certain conditions for this proposed project to work, else blood will flow as we will not fail to resist this useless attempt.

He declared that government should halt further criminal act being perpetrated against the Niger-Delta.

Adding: "It is a pity that the Federal government has never planned anything good for the Niger-Delta people."

He said the youths of the region would not allow government to short-change us again, pointing out that "it is this so-called project that will either unite us with the Federal Government or tear us apart again".

"Both Ijaw, Isekiri Isoko and youths from other ethnic group in the region will be strongly united to fight this evil to a stand still because we now realize that the Federal government does not mean

well for the people of the Niger-Delta", he stated.

According to him, "Government should ensure that the same pipeline they used in siphoning our oil and gas to the North should be used to bring in clean water to the Niger-Delta. This inhuman, act and criminal marginalization must stop forthwith."

"Before now, we have been crying for employment for our teeming jobless youths. We want government to give at least 2,000 job opportunity to us because the project they are taking to Lagos will fetch the people there the same job figure", he added.

He therefore urged President Yar'Adua to implement the master plan for the development of the region, adding that once the region is developed the violence in the region will stop immediately as there will be enough infrastructural development.

developed the gas plants in Delta, Bayelsa and Rivers states was unacceptable and "will be vehemently resisted by all Niger Delians," adding that the plan would "spring another round of crisis in the region that the Federal Government will not be able to curtail at the end of the day."

He said the people of "Niger Delta are opposed to the idea of piping their gas to develop other regions other than the Niger Delta," explaining that "there is no fairness, justice and equity which are principle of the rule of law as being canvassed by Mr. President."

Isekure pointed out that the people of the Niger Delta wanted development, justice and fairness. "We want the gas plant to be located in the region and Federal Government should develop the gas plants in Delta, Bayelsa and Rivers. This will create employment for our people and especially the youths."

He frowned at the Federal Government for ordering oil companies operating in the Niger Delta to relocate their operational headquarters from the region to Lagos, saying that the policy on relocation had in no small measure contributed to the development of Lagos State.

## Obong's Stool: New Obong May Face Committal Proceedings

FROM EDIM EDIM, CALABAR

As the lingering crisis occasioned by the installation of the new Obong of Calabar continues following the traditional illness of the former Obong of Calabar, Prof. Nta Elijah Henshaw IV, a High Court sitting in Calabar has given notice to Enubom Easien Ekpenyong Effio, Etubom Michael Achibong and the Obong of Calabar, Enubom Ekpo Okon Abasi, that the Court shall on Wednesday May 21, 2008 show cause why Order of committal proceedings should not be made against them.

Enubom Dr. Anthony Ani (Plaintiff) had on April 29, 2008, at the state High Court sought an interim injunction restraining the Etubom Traditional Council led by

Easien Ekpenyong Effio and the Obong-elect, Enubom Ekpo Abasi and others from doing any thing as regards the controversial throne of the Obong of Calabar pending

the determination of the motion on notice.

The injunction was given by Justice Eyo Effiom Ita of the Calabar High Court Counsel to the Plaintiff, Mr Joe Agi,

had drawn the attention of the court to the schedule of events drawn by the defendants on the Obsequies ceremony of the late Obong of Calabar, Edidem Nta

Elijah Henshaw IV, despite court processes.

According to form 49 issued by the court dated May 2, 2008, the court said you are required to attend the

court on the 21st day of May to show why an Order for your committal should not be made". Counsel for the plaintiff, Mr Joe Agi, had sought the court an Order of the granting leave to the applicant to commence committal proceedings against the contemnors.

Agi also sought an Order committing the contemnors to the Federal Prisons, Aikara, for disobeying the instruction of the Honourable Court. Moving a motion of urgent matters of importance, a member of the Cross River State House of Assembly, representing Calabar South, Hon. Orok Duke, Thursday, said people are doing things in a disjointed manner pretending that nothing is happening, while something is happening". He alleged that people were being killed by reprisal attacks from the contending groups in the Obongship stool.

He urged the state government to urgently step in having issued notice to those contesting the Obongship stool to follow the due process, adding that "let them stop killing members of my constituency".

### Ikot Akpan Udo: Andonis kill another citizen, plan fresh mayhem

ANDONIS militants last Thursday kidnapped and reportedly killed another citizen at Ikot Akpan Udo. The man, identified as Christian Ufot Elijah, of Ikot Okwo village, was said to have been kidnapped by the Andonis on his way to inspect his fishing trap at Ikot Akpan Udo. Sunday informant gathered that the said Mr. Elijah went in company of his son from their Ikot Okwo, a neighbouring village home on his motorcycle to Ikot Akpan Udo. Thursday morning, but were overpowered by the Andonis while inspecting their fishing materials.

It was gathered that his son escaped from the scene to report the incident, but the father has still not been found and is feared dead. The policemen on duty at Ikot Akpan Udo have reportedly advised the people not to retaliate. Meanwhile, inhabitants of Ikot Okwo and Ikot Ikwo were said to be relocating to Ete yesterday following reports of fresh mayhem by the Andonis. Sunday informant

was informed that the Andonis were already marching on the two villages to wreak visible destruction on them.

Last weekend, the Akwa Ibom State government announced that it had set up a judicial commission of inquiry to ascertain the remote and immediate causes of the mayhem, which the deputy governor, Chief Patrick Ekpo, during a fact finding visit, September 1, described as an unprecedented carnage.

It will be recalled that on August 28, Andonis in 15 speedboats, armed with guns, missiles and dynamites, killed 11 persons, burnt down and destroyed all houses in Ikot Akpan Udo in what has been described as the worst attack ever unleashed on a community by the Andonis.

Ikot Akpan Udo citizens have since been scattered as refugees at Ete, Ikot Okwo and Ikot Ikwo villages in Ikot Abasi LGA of the state and are pleading for governments' support to facilitate their rebuilding of their houses and return to the community.

### Communal clash erupts in C/River over mining rights

By John Igboharo

CALABAR—A MOVE by community leaders in Gabu in northern Cross River State to grant mining rights of barite to a company, Enso Ashapara, has led to communal clashes in the area, leading to the burning down of houses and leaving many people seriously wounded.

It will be recalled that Gabu was touted as the site where the WING Airlines aircraft crashed in March, 2008 until it was discovered that no such thing happened there.

A communal crisis erupted in Gabu weekend leaving scores of people wounded and several houses razed by fire.

The crisis which has deep roots in an earlier misunderstanding between factions of the com-

munit pitted against each other over how to mine a rocky substance, barite, used by oil companies to ease the extraction of the black gold, came to a head weekend when leaders of the community granted mining rights to a company, Enso Ashapara. The youths reacted violently.

Years before now illegal miners had been mining until they were stopped by the Federal Ministry of Solid Minerals in Abuja which granted mining rights last year to EMO ASHAPURA to take over the mining of the product.

The illegal miners resisted this move and went ahead to ensure that the company was not granted access to the location which harbours the substance.

The weekend eruption followed the granting of rights to the company by the community

leaders. The youths went on the rampage and razed down the house belonging to the Clan Head, Chief Theophilus Emri, and also those of Tony Ibiabo, Justin Okepe and Mark Ibiabo.

Contacted, Mr Friday Eji, the Special Adviser to the Chairman of Yala Local Government Area on Security, said "the police made several efforts to gain entry to the community on the first two days of the conflict but could not owing to the restiveness of the protesters who were armed with dangerous weapons."

Continuing, he said, "Mr U.S.A Brown the DPO of Yala led a team of policemen there on the 24th and 25th of July to try to quell the crisis but the protesters had formed barricades along the way to the village and were armed with dangerous weapons."



## Senators Lament Niger Delta Situation ✕✕

From Alifa Daniel,  
Asst Political Editor,  
Abuja.

**F**ROM Kano State he came to the Niger Delta region, and with a voice laden with emotions he declared to his colleagues: "Believe me, anywhere I go to now I know exactly what is going on in my own country. I live in the same country with these people and I feel really ashamed to be calling myself a Nigerian, seeing what is going on in the Niger Delta."

These were the words of Senator Mohammed Adamu Bello, going by documents made available to *The Guardian*.

*The Guardian* had exclusively reported last Sunday the comments of

Deputy Senate President, Ike Ekweremadu and Senate Leader Teslim Folarin, but fresh documents also narrate the comments of other Senators, who put the blame for the problems of the Delta at the political leadership in the area.

Bello's animadversion of his visit, with other colleagues, to the creeks was part of emotional outbursts from the lawmakers, who put much of the blame for the neglect of the region squarely at the doorstep of the political leadership of the region, the federal government and the militant youths.

Bello adds: "I do not think that anybody would have been able to live with what I have

**NATIONAL**  
seen in the Niger Delta. It is beyond neglect, it is completely criminal. There is one very important factor that is here, even though we keep talking about people stealing money and so on and so forth. From the statistics we got, even before we left here, every 60 per cent of any amount of money is wasted."

Senator Bode Olajumoke (Ondo North), said but for the resilience of the people, what has been happening in the Niger Delta cannot be accepted in any other society.

Senator Bassey Ewa-Henshaw (Cross River South) observed that it

was "criminal for any political leader, who sees what the people in this region are going through to be stealing their money" adding that the people of the region were not asking to be given everything because the oil is from Niger Delta, but that they expect that "as much as the rest of Nigeria are sharing from the resources that come from here, they also should share in the problem that have arisen as a result of the oil."

Senator Ibrahim Idris (Katsina Central), admitted that though he expected to meet combative residents of the region, he was pleasantly surprised to discover the people were like ordinary Nigerian folks.

## Niger Delta Crisis A Nightmare, Says Yar'Adua ✕✕

From Suzzane Akhaine  
(Kaduna)

**P**RESIDENT Umaru Musa Yar'Adua has expressed disappointment in the lingering crisis in the Niger Delta, describing it as a night-

mare to his administration. He said the situation in the oil-rich region has not only become a major concern to the administration, but also posed a serious threat to the economy of the country

and scaring away investors in the region. Said he: "The Niger Delta situation continues to be a major concern facing this government. While acknowledging the challenges facing the people of the

Niger Delta, we must not allow the activities of a few criminal minds to create a permanent state of insecurity in the region, thereby destroying the economy and scare away investors."

who made the assertion in Kaduna at the weekend on the occasion of the Passing Out Parade (POP) of the officers cadets of the 66th Regular Course of the Nigerian Defence,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## Be Honest With Niger Delta, Okocha Tells FG

From Kelvin Ebihi,  
Port-Harcourt

**T**HE former President of the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), Onueze Chukwujika Okocha (SAN), has implored the federal Government to be honest in its stated goal of developing the Niger Delta.

Speaking about the dete-

**RIVERS**  
riorating security situation in the area, Okocha told *The Guardian* in Port Harcourt yesterday that though the Niger Delta is one of President Umaru Yar'Adua's seven-point agenda, no meaningful effort has been made to address

the problem of the area, about one year into his administration. Okocha said it was because of this lack of development that the people of the area have been complaining of marginalisation, deprivation and discrimination.

Though he agreed with the planned Niger Delta

peace summit, he expressed dismay that it was taking the federal government too long to convene. He also urged the federal government to adopt a more honest approach in tackling the growing crisis of insecurity in the area.

"We from Rivers State have seen what this prob-

lem is doing to our economy what it is doing to everyday life," he said. "Life is no longer safe. Someone use the term that the area has become militarised. The government needs to address the underlying problems that resulted in this."

Okocha said it was

the federal Government, Baba-Gana Kingibe to partly attribute the problem of the Niger Delta to corruption on the part of the various state governments. He said the funds available to the states and the NNDC is grossly insufficient for the needs of the region.

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## Seriously, how to solve Niger Delta problem

By Dele Cole

### NEWS ANALYSIS

***They built our modern capital Abuja using one per cent of the federation account. The cities of Port Harcourt, Warri, Eket, Yenagoa and Asaba should look more like Abuja***

IT is said in the Nigerian military that you will never find a poor admiral. It is easy to see why. Nigeria loses between \$4 billion and \$18 billion worth of oil a year to illegal bunkering, depending on the estimates you use. This theft began at about 30,000 b/d. In 2001, it reached 200,000 b/d and it may now intermittently reach 500,000. On a bad day, 25 per cent of Nigeria's oil exports are illegal. If the trend continues, new exploration will become

impossible. Nigeria cannot afford to choke the goose that lays its golden egg. The Niger Delta crisis starts

ed as a legitimate struggle by ethnic Ijaw groups with strong cause for discontent with the oil companies operating in the region as well as with the government. Then, in 1998, came the return of political parties which began to recruit militants to fight for them during elections. They sent these militants for training in other parts of Africa, Latin America and in Nigeria itself. They are experienced commandos trained and armed in many cases at the behest of state government

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TODAY

OWEI

LAKEMFA

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## Seriously, how to solve N-Delta problem

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officials.

These groups began the oil bunkering industry. It started small and expanded rapidly. Nowadays, smaller ships ferry back and forth to fill up tankers on high seas. The tankers often come with guns, exchanged as part payment for oil. The oil is then transported to third parties, often to refineries in Central Asia and eastern Europe, which buy at a discount to market price, refine the oil and sell it on the world market. Imagine. This is a global "business" run from mosquito-infested swamps, turning over \$2bn a day.

The military has been trying to halt the insurrection since 2000 without success. The bigger the incentive (spiralling oil prices) the more remote the possibility the military will win. The more oil sold through the bunkering network, the greater the number of Nigerians with an interest in keeping it going. We know where it is going. We know who is stealing it, and we know the beneficiaries.

So what can we do? Despite the severity of the crisis, there is a solution and it must be implemented with conviction. Remember the vast majority of people in the Niger Delta have not benefited from oil. They have no power, no water, no services and no jobs.

There are three stages we must go through. First, we have to put in place a tracking system. This is not a new idea. In 2003, Shell proposed the certification of oil exports based on chemical fingerprinting to prevent stolen oil being sold on the open market. Companies operating in Nigeria have the technology to trace oil to individual flow stations. So, if a ship is stopped and contains oil that does not appear to have a legitimate source, a sample can be taken. If there is no record of a sale from the source to the operator of the vessel, then the government could confiscate the oil or require those purchasing it, such as refineries, to verify its provenance. In this way it should be possible to create a paper trail at least as effective as the Kimberley Process, established to curb the trade in conflict diamonds from Africa's war zones. Even if this cannot stop bunkering altogether, it should at least mean that stolen oil is sold at a greater discount, thus undercutting profits from the illegal trade.

Second, we need to bring in well-trained and equipped private security operatives to guard the oil from extraction to export. They could be paid a commission based on the amount of oil they save. Some of the militants themselves could be incorporated into this effort, which would need reinforcement from a robust international monitoring body with boots on the ground. The turmoil in the delta contributes

***The militants the party leaders trained, with return to party politics in 1998, began the oil bunkering business***

greatly to volatility in world oil prices. The world, therefore, has an interest in seeing it stop.

Third, the government is to demonstrate political will to gain the support of the local population. They built our modern capital Abuja using one per cent of the federation account. The cities of Port Harcourt, Warri, Eket, Yenagoa and Asaba should look more like Abuja. Look at how Aberdeen grew from North Sea oil, at how the Gulf cities of Doha, Abu Dhabi and Dubai have developed. Get world-class services and infrastructure. Build airports and hotels. Move the offices of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation to the region.

Once you change their surroundings, local people will see you are serious and the justification for the insurrection will disappear. This cannot be done using existing structures.

The Niger Delta Development Commission is a small palliative. It is made up of state government appointees and every single managing director and chairman of the NNDC has attempted to become the governor of his state. Organisations for regional development need independence, authority and the expertise to act. It doesn't matter where this comes from. You could put a Welshman or a Dutchman in charge of operations.

How to pay for it? If we recover only 25 per cent of the oil that is bunkered and allocate a portion of that for development of the region we will already have billions. Provided the system is transparent, there will be gains not just for the delta but for all 36 states whose budgets are diminished by this theft. We will need to identify accurately the countries buying stolen oil and secure co-operation from their governments. We will need to prosecute those people buying the oil. The tracking system gives us the evidence trail. We will need support from the international community to do this. But it can be done. There is enough money to transform the Niger Delta. It would be criminal of us not to try.

*The author, Dele Cole, was Nigeria's former Ambassador to Brazil and Social Adviser to President Olusegun Obasanjo between 1999 and 2001. This article was first published in the Financial Times*



# Focus on Politics

Saturday, September 20, 2008

Weekly Trust

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Isa Sa'adu

**Weekly Trust:** As a human rights activist, do you consider the creation of the Niger Delta Ministry as a solution to the lingering problem of violence in the region?

**Shehu Sani:** First of all, there is nothing wrong for a government to create any ministry for any purpose. But the question we need to ask ourselves is will the creation of the Niger Delta Ministry change the fortunes or misfortunes of the Niger Delta people? The answer is no. Such a ministry doesn't have a relevance to the situation the people of the region have found themselves in. The demand of the people is not a ministry but an end to the socio-economic problems of the region. These include pervasive injustice, insecurity and the abject neglect of the region by successive regimes. The people of Niger Delta simply ask for a fair share of resources tapped from their own part of the country. They want good roads to connect their villages and towns. They want electricity, schools for their children, employment for their youths, standard health care system, among other socio-economic amenities, that are commensurate to the kind of resources that is accrued from that part of the country.

They want conducive environment which they can live in Ministry of Niger Delta will only be advantageous to the government because we will have a ministry, most likely to be headed by a Niger Delta, to absorb all blames which could have been channelled to the presidency. In the actual sense, I don't think any right thinking person will believe that the Niger Delta ministry will solve the problem of the region. If we have a ministry of works, it doesn't mean that the problems will come to an end, if we have a Ministry of water resources, it doesn't mean that the problem of water will come to an end etcetera.

**WT:** But the government has said the ministry's major task is to handle the socio-economic problems you are talking about?

**Sani:** A socio-economic problem like the one in the Niger Delta requires the political will, commitment and zeal of the country's leadership. If we have not forgotten in the eight years of the Obasanjo administration, there were series of committees set up to find solutions to the Niger Delta crises and each of those committees has made a report. The reports were submitted to President Obasanjo but they were kept under the carpet. On assumption of office, President Yar'adua also came up with a committee headed by Kalu Idika Kulu but cannot make any difference. This is apart from the new approach by the National Assembly that makes it a monthly or quarterly ritual to visit the Niger Delta and see for themselves what is on the ground. What about the seminars and conferences of the so-called stakeholders that we had in the eight years of Obasanjo's government all in attempts to find solutions to the Niger Delta crises?

The problems of Niger Delta are about development and there are a lot of things that we can do with the wealth that comes from our crude oil to help the people of the region. In Saudi Arabia, for example, they are building new cities in the desert with crude oil monies. Hugo Chavez of Venezuela is building what he called a socialist modern city that could accommodate millions of Venezuelans. A lot of things can be done.

If you go to countries like Saudi Arabia, you will see how oil wealth has improved the people. Niger Delta is a resource rich area, cannot you see who is exploiting it? The whole oil is not being provided and it is being used for the benefit of a few people.

## Niger Delta Ministry, a waste of resources – Shehu Sani

The President of Civil Rights Congress, a human rights organisation, Malam Shehu Sani, is of the opinion that creation of the Niger Delta Ministry would redress the Niger Delta crisis describing the ministry as a waste of time and resources. He spoke on President Umaru Musa Yar'adua's health among other issues. Excerpts:

of ideas on how to solve the problems of Niger Delta, they should better any it not to continue to deceive ourselves by going round the problems. The fact remains that Niger Delta is as impoverished as any part of the country and the failure of the successive administrations to address the problems of the Niger Delta is the same failure of that kind of class to address the problem of development in the whole country.

To effectively address the problems of Niger Delta, we must have a work-on-site president. A president who will see projects being executed in the region through his direct supervision than depending on other people to do it.

**WT:** What do you think can be done to solve the problems of the Niger Delta since you have dismissed the idea of the ministry?

**Sani:** We need to ask ourselves about the master-plan of the Niger Delta that clearly stated the number of roads that should be constructed in the Niger Delta, villages that need to be linked with electricity, how employments should be created, how schools should be built among others; that document is laying idle. A responsible government should have simply pick up that document and implement it to the latter, but we are still at a point whereby even the governors of the region are more interested in pestering their own mess and also building political cronies and making the problem of the region at the front banner of their own bargain with the government at the centre. Therefore creating ministry for Niger Delta is nothing more than a waste of time and resources since the political class and chiefs of the region are part of the problem. The solution to the problem as I said earlier is to implement the Niger Delta master plan and this should be done by a work-on-site president.

**WT:** What is your view on controversy surrounding the health of President Umaru Musa Yar'adua?

**Sani:** The point here is that President Yar'adua is a human being who can have cancer, diabetes etcetera and he can be healthy. What we should constantly remind ourselves is that the position of the President is for somebody who is healthy and competent. Why Nigerians are impatient of the health of the president is that Yar'adua has inherited a people who have been impoverished, therefore Yar'adua does not have a limitless time to perform. Nigerians need performance and delivery. Yar'adua doesn't have up to the year 2020 for Nigerians to have a better life. He has a four-year mandate to perform, that is, if the mandate is confirmed



Malam Shehu Sani

by the Supreme Court. If at the end of his tenure, the quality of lives of Nigerians has not improved, no one will listen to his lofty word of 2020.

Nigerians deserve the right to know the state of health of their president as his health is directly proportional to the health of the government and the country. If a president is sick for a long time, there is no doubt that activities of government will come to a standstill, being Nigeria a federal state. What I am saying is that our problems will be better solved if the President has the stability and composure to attend to issues. The situation we are now in is not a healthy one. President Yar'adua must not over stretch himself in order to impress that he is capable of being the president when he is not. Yar'adua's priority should be his own physical well being and in the course of that, the affairs of governance must not suffer. If he insists on being the president he may not be doing well for

himself, his family and well wishers nor will that be doing any good to the whole country.

My own suggestion is that Yar'adua should take enough time to take care of his health and if he knows that his health is incapable of taking the responsibility of the office of the president then he should simply leave the office and attend to his health. The issues of health are not something that one can hide. Yar'adua has revealed that since 1986 he has been attending to issues of his health. There is no reason therefore for him stretching himself. The decisions are therefore his; it is to either give priority to his well being or to continue to listen to sycophants who will always sound to his ears that he can still move on. Whatever happens at the end of the day, these people have nothing to loose but only Yar'adua. Yar'adua should therefore make his health a priority and not the presidency and if his health comes as an upshot to the presidency he should choose his health.

To effectively address the problems of Niger Delta, we must have a work-on-site president. A president who will see projects being executed in the region through his direct supervision than depending on other people to do it.



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## Niger Delta crisis is real danger, says Eso

**EMINENT** jurist, Justice Kayode Eso, yesterday placed on the front burner the lingering crisis in the Niger Delta and its implications for national stability.

Eso, who is the chairman of the Rivers State Youth and Reconciliation Commission, warned that any attempt to pay

lip service to the conflict by the various stakeholders could spell doom for the country. In fact, Eso said that with the protracted crisis, Nigeria is sitting on a

leg of gun-powder and called for drastic measures that would make insurgent groups lay down arms and address the root causes of their emergence.

*From Mada Oluwaroh (Abuja) and Kelvin Ehir (Port Harcourt)*

The Rivers State Governor, Chibuke Amaechi, who appeared

before the commission yesterday in Port Harcourt as its first witness, denied complicity or arranging with any persons to buy arms and arm groups to achieve

any political or economic objective.

In his opening speech at the beginning of the commission's public hearing, Eso noted that the contents of the over

200 memoranda received by the commission point to one salient fact: all is not well with the Niger Delta which is the economic backbone of the country.

He said: "The contents of the memoranda, which we have received, have gone a long way for anyone to come to a

Continued on Page 2

## Nigeria sits on keg of gunpowder

Continued from Page 1

conclusion that all is certainly not well with the Niger Delta, the economy pivot of the nation and unless something is done drastically and urgently, this country is sitting on a keg of gun-powder.

Eso noted that from the submissions, there were accusations that politicians had armed some insurgent groups in the region, while those engaged in acts of insurrection accused the government of ruling the region without the least consideration for the people.

According to him, "open and veiled war have been unleashed on the innocent citizens. Most importantly, the

problem has given rise to international recognition of the dastardly situation and its effects on world economy. Oil producing corporations have been made to suffer both in manpower and materials."

He continued: "The effect of the insurgency is already radiating globally and the unprecedented rise in oil prices is being associated with the unrest in the region, which has become an ill-wind that blows nobody any good."

Eso explained that the commission is not a witch-hunting body nor is it designed to lure in the insurgents. Rather, he said it is primarily to identify what has gone wrong, where and who are the actors.

Amaechi said that since the beginning of his political career, he had never used or approved the use of armed groups or thugs to win elections. He also said that from his days as the Speaker of the Rivers State House of Assembly till when he became the governor, he had never organised, conspired, sponsored or armed anyone to attack or intimidate or assassinate any person.

The governor, who was in the witness stand for over three hours, said during his tenure as the Speaker of the state legislature, he had become increasingly worried by the use of firearms by youths to settle grievances either for themselves or on behalf of their sponsors.

He said that this concern spurred him to come up with the Secret Chiefs Law, which he lamented had been honoured more in breach than in the observance. He also noted that the Pyrates Confraternity is the only association on the list of prohibited groups that has sued the state government on the matter.

Despite assurances that security agencies would not arrest them, kingpins of the major militant groups like Abacha Tom, Soboma George and Fara Dagogo accused of sponsoring the recent disturbances in Rivers failed to appear before the commission.

Ateke, who was represented by his counsel, Prince Hussein Omoh Igielemai, alleged that Amaechi had ordered the destruction of his camp and his houses. The wanted militia

leader said he lost N6.2 million in cash when the Joint Task Force (JTF) raided his camp at Oluashiri and demanded for compensation.

Amaechi, who denied planning arms at Ateke's house, also declared that he stopped the Senate President, David Mark, from visiting him in the creeks because the Federal Government had not rescinded its decision to get him arrested and tried.

Ateke, according to him, had in 2004 in the presence of the former President Olusegun Obasanjo in Aso Rock, Abuja, admitted to having killed over 2,000 persons. The governor said the forgiveness of the various militia leaders would depend on the collective will of the people of the state.

Amaechi, who promised to enforce the law, apologised for the inability of the past governments in the state to do so hence the situation the state now finds itself.

Meanwhile, the Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Ganiyu Adekeye, has announced that the Nigerian Navy will set up four more bases to give impetus to the fight against illegal bunkering and militancy in the Niger Delta.

He also stated yesterday in Abuja that the Navy would in the next two weeks take delivery of weapon systems and other Naval equipment, including 17-metre fast patrol boats and Augusta helicopters.

Adekeye told journalists at Naval Headquarters that

insinuations that the Navy has the highest rate of retirement in the Armed Forces is "totally false".

He said: "As a matter of fact, our rate of retirement was never higher than any arm of the Armed Forces. This is a fact that can be checked. Moreover, we cannot say because we are expanding and acquiring new equipment, we will not retire those who are due or those that are counter-productive to the service. Furthermore, if there is no such exercise, how do we promote younger and promising officers?"

The Naval boss however lamented the state of available platforms, saying: "We have two ships that were evenly distributed between the two commands and at best level, only one was working at a time. But we are now able to put more ships to sea for exercises and patrols. Right now, we have about three to four ships patrolling. That is why we do not have so much problems arising from offshore anymore."

Adekeye described piracy as a major challenge facing the service, noting that a number of factors contribute to the problems faced by the Navy in arresting the situation.

Although the Naval chief reiterated the ability and commitment of the JTF to tackle militancy in the Niger Delta, he said the drastic reduction in piracy offshore was responsible for the increase in the level of criminality in the form of militancy, kidnapping and bank robbery.

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## YIYI OSUNDARE

Let Prof. Nwosu Summon Abiola...  
and Give Him The Garland He  
and His Military Paymasters  
Have Kept Away From Him...

OLITICS /80



## What Nigerians Missed In My Father's Message

— Jesu Oyingbo's  
Daughter

Ibru Centre /31



## At Home With Kanu Nwankwo And Family In Portsmouth

Sports /91



# THE GUARDIAN

CONSCIENCE, NURTURED BY TRUTH

OL. 26, NO. 10,791

SUNDAY, JULY 13, 2008

N200

## Niger Delta Our Agenda For The Summit



By Ehekoye Ezomon

It is no longer  
whether the pro-  
posed Summit on the  
Niger Delta crisis will  
hold; the question is  
when and how.

The initial scepticism  
and outright opposi-  
tion to the Summit by  
Nigerians, especially  
the peoples of the

DETAILS ON  
PAGES 18-20;  
21-25 & 71-75

Niger Delta itself, were  
fuelled by the proposal  
of Professor Ibrahim  
Gambri, as the chair-  
man-designate of the  
Summit.

But now that govern-  
ment has agreed to  
CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Soyinka,  
Aregbesola,  
Others,  
Dismiss Osun  
Elections  
Tribunal

By Kodilinyo  
Obiagwu, Kamal  
Tayo Oropo and  
Blodun Penoro

AHEAD of its ruling  
on Tuesday, the  
Action Congress (AC),  
candidate in last year's  
governorship election in  
Osun State, Rauf  
Aregbesola, has called  
for the dissolution of  
the election petitions  
tribunal in the state.

This follows recent  
events, which, he said,  
had eroded whatever  
CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

• CROSSROADS: Bullet Proof Solution To Niger Delta Question  
• OUTLOOK: Niger Delta: Crisis Or Opportunity

P.70

P.27

**fayrouz**  
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## NIGER DELTA SUMMIT

# Eminent Nigerians State Agenda

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1  
ment appears to have come to grips with that development and is said to be shopping for

a replacement, the people's attention has shifted to the appropriateness of the Summit, the modalities for holding it and

the likely implementation of its outcome. Nigerians have become wary of such summits, conferences and talkshops, whose

outcome had never been implemented or implemented selectively and in total breach of their recommendations.

A lot of works, dating back to the colonial era, had been done particularly on the lingering Niger Delta crisis, with nothing to

show for all the efforts and resources marshalled for them.

Which is why many Nigerians question the relevance of another round of concave that may go the way of its predecessors.

But more worrisome is the notion that government has not learned any lessons from previous mistakes in staging conferences, which lack legal backing and its modalities muddled up or skewed in favour of those in authority rather than those that were aggrieved.

Readily recalled is the National Political Reform Conference, which the Obasanjo government established in 2006 without an enabling law by the National Assembly, which ultimately refused to appropriate money for its hosting.

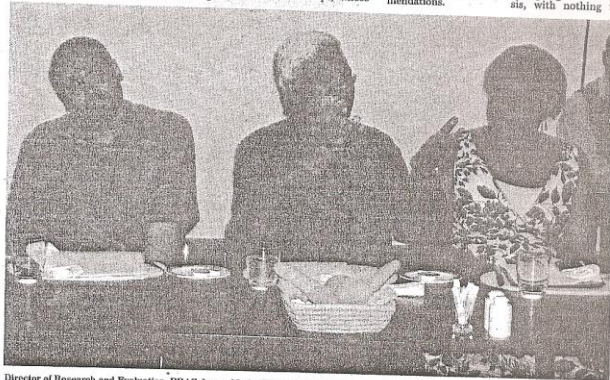
Besides, the selection of representatives was manipulated in such a way that it was peopled by "yes men" who took government agenda there and defended it to the detriment of the realities on ground. That actually prompted the

Niger Delta people to stage a walkout when the contentious issue of 'Resource Control' was almost trivialised against the formula in the first place.

It is as if the proposed Summit will hold the next moment, yet government has not secured the relevant law for its convocation nor has it put out the modalities for the selection of delegates to the likely momentous event.

When will these happen given that the National Assembly is embarking on a two-month recess? Or is it that government is playing for time, as alleged by concerned Nigerians?

Whatever the government position, however, *The Guardian*, starting from tomorrow, kicks off the 'Great Debate' with incisive and penetrating contributions from Nigerians of diverse backgrounds ranging from so-called militants, activists, politicians, elder statesmen, scholars, lawmakers, students, traders, among others.



Director of Research and Evaluation, BRAC, Imran Matia; Founder and Chairperson of BRAC, Fazle Hasan and Executive Director of DARC, Lagos, Ms Nguzi Eze-Akili at a dinner between players in the Nigerian Microfinance sector and the BRAC team from Indonesia. PHOTO: TEMPLER OLAYIA



# DAILY TRUST

Trust Is A Burden  
THURSDAY, AUGUST 14, 2008 VOL. 19 NO. 74 SHA'ABAN 13, 1429 AH www.dailytrust.com N100



**RMAFC denies jumbo pay for lawmakers**  
- Page 2

**KIA**  
**KIA MOTORS**  
The Power to Surprise  
www.kiamotornigeria.com

**Nigeria regains leading position in oil production**  
- Page 2

## Goodbye, Bakassi

By Tshikoluh Hahsh, Yinka A. Ibrahim, Adedunwa Bangbaya, Olatunji Alao & Francis Okeke

**C**ameroon's flag will be hoisted at Abana, former headquarters of Bakassi Local Government Area of Cross River State this morning to signal the final pullout of Nigeria from the disputed peninsula.

Today's ceremony is to be performed by Minister of Justice Michael Aondoakaa and officials of the Cross River State Government.

Nigeria agreed to cede Bakassi after an International court of Justice ruling in 2001 said the peninsula belonged to Cameroon. Former President Olusegun Obasanjo and his Cameroonian counterpart Paul Biya signed the Greentree Agreement in the US, which spell out modalities of the handover due to be completed today.

Despite widespread opposition to the handover, President Umaru Yar'adua on Tuesday said there was no going back.

Secretary to the Cross River State Government Mr. Fidelis Ugbo in a statement confirmed Abana as venue of the handover ceremony, the *New Agency of Nigeria* (NAN) reported.

The Senate—which had all along opposed the pullout on legal grounds—yesterday gave a belated endorsement to the handover. Senate spokesman Ayoga Eze (PDP, Enugu) told newsmen in Abuja that Nigeria was in a no-choice situation.

"The issue of Bakassi is delicate. We need to get this, whether to be a bad boy and renege the court ruling or to respect the court ruling," he said.

The Senate had insisted that the handover must be suspended until the



Greentree Agreement was ratified by the legislature. Eze yesterday said the pullout "is just a process, the Senate would ratify the treaty after. It will come in phases."

He added: "The President has the judgement on his lap. We're a signatory to the ICJ, we are aspiring to be a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. The President is careful and doesn't want to jeopardise the chance."

Prominent lawyers yesterday disagreed

over the legality and propriety of ceding Bakassi to Cameroon.

Former legal adviser to the late Head of State General Sani Abacha, Professor Awele Yadhwa, said Nigeria would risk some consequences if it defies the world court ruling. He said though the past administration was wrong to have accepted the treaty, Nigeria is now obliged to honour it.

"Although it is regrettable that this is the treaty, which the Federal Government is imple-

**•Senate okays handover, lawyers disagree**

menting without having it ratified by the National Assembly, the fact of the matter is that as far as the Federal Government is concerned, it could have handed over Bakassi and other areas with or without its ratification in furtherance of the International Court of Justice order," he said.

He said the controversy about non-ratification of the treaty was immaterial to the international community. "That is the big legal ques-

Cont. on Pg. 4

**AT LAGOS, ADVOCATES OF SECESSION**  
"We have a duty to respect the Greentree Agreement," he said.  
Prince Adewale Ademola, a Lagos based lawyer, said, "There are some orders that cannot be obeyed. This particular order cannot be obeyed. As at today, the Constitution still recognizes Bakassi as a local government in Nigeria. It will be wrong to hand over."  
Senator Bassey Ewa-Henshaw (Cross River South) warned of humanitarian crises. He said, "I am told that they need over 3,000 housing units but that so far only about 100 have been built."

# NEWS

Continued from Page 1

tion we have to sort out internally. But Cameroon, United Nations and the rest of the world would not care what we do because it is our internal problem," he said.

"It is indeed necessary in the sense that the constitution requires that and off course it is going to affect a provision of a constitution in the sense that Bakassi is a local government in Cross River State, which is recognised by our constitution and therefore is being unilaterally changed by the chief executive."

On the Federal High Court order that asked for a stay of action, Yaddu said, "Obviously the order of the Abuja Federal High Court clearly is questionable because it has no jurisdiction to stop the handover and even if you say you want concede with the court, its order is neither here nor there because the maintenance of the status quo could be interpreted any how including continuing with the handover because Federal Government has started it and that could be the status quo."

But President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) Mr. Olu Adegboye (SAN) said the Federal Government should have stayed action until the controversies have been sorted out.

"I think that the Federal Government can still delay the handover and explore the possibility of a renewed diplomatic agreement which does not mean that Nigeria is not bound by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) judgment."

"Unfortunately, legally we made the mistake of subjecting to the jurisdiction of the ICJ. We are therefore bound by the ICJ's decision. But there should be a diplomatic and political solution to the problem because you cannot compel people to be part of another country," he said.

Barrister Festus Keyamo said there was no option but to cede Bakassi to Cameroon. "We have a duty to respect the Greentree Agreement," he said.

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No compensation to them for losing their ancestral homes and no provision for a new form of livelihood. There are about 3,000 refugees already. More refugees are going into Akwa Ibom. It's bad that some Nigerians have been turned into refugees in their land."

He added, "I see conflict. The people are very unhappy and there have been skirmishes already since this whole ceding exercise started."

There have been conflicts between Nigerians and Cameroonians. On the other hand, we are facing difficulties harmonizing the traditional, political and social structures between the people that own the land where they are being resettled and the Bakassi people that are moving there."

Member of the House of Representatives Sada Soli Jibia (PDP, Katsina) said Nigeria entered into an agreement and must be bound by it.

"Can this government abrogate that agreement? Remember, it is a country that went to the International Court of Justice and we lost that case. What do

you expect Nigeria to do?" The Action Congress (AC) yesterday asked the Federal Government to defer the handover until the legal issues have been sorted out.

In a statement, AC's National Publicity Secretary Lai Mohammed said the delay would enable the National Assembly to ratify the treaty.

"The temptation to go ahead with the handover, just to win some immediate favours from the international community especially by an administration that is standing on one foot is so great. But succumbing to it will bring more pain than joy at the end."

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## Goodbye, Bakassi

Yar' Adua administration to do the right thing before handing over Bakassi, in line with the ICJ ruling.

Nothing is sacrosanct about August 14th that it cannot be deferred," Mohammed said.

### Bakassi: Some key facts

\* The 3,000 sq km (1,200 sq mile) peninsula in the Gulf of Guinea is mostly wetlands, rich in fish. Its offshore waters contain several oilfields and there are expectations of more to be discovered.

\* With its close proximity to the Niger Delta, heart of Nigeria's oil production, industry experts believe the peninsula could hold significant amounts of oil deposits that would help boost Cameroon's declining production of around 90,000 barrels per day.

\* The International Court of Justice (ICJ) gave Bakassi to Cameroon in a 2002 ruling, based largely on a 1913 treaty between former colonial powers Britain and Germany.

\* Nigeria and Cameroon fought over Bakassi in 1994 when Cameroon first took its case to the World Court. There were serious clashes in 1996.

\* The handover has been delayed since an initial 2004 deadline, but Nigerian troops have gradually handed over control and the process should be complete on Aug. 14.

\* Some Bakassi leaders and Nigerian lawmakers object, saying 500,000 people are there and do not want to become Cameroonians. U.N. officials put the population much lower.

\* Suspected Nigerian rebels killed 21 Cameroonian soldiers on Nov. 12 in a raid for which no group claimed responsibility.

\* Last month a little-known armed Nigerian group launched two attacks on Cameroonian soldiers in Bakassi and threatened more violence until the transfer is renegotiated.

\* Nigeria's border with Cameroon, which runs from Lake Chad to the Gulf of Guinea, has never been established using modern surveying techniques and was charted in colonial times using landmarks such as rivers and trees.

\* A U.N.-led joint commission was set up in 2002 to define the 1,600-km (1,000-mile) land boundary between the two countries following the ICJ ruling on Bakassi.

Source: Reuters



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- Towards a better life for the people

OCTOBER 5, 2008, VOL. 23 NO. 1069023 — N100.00

# Niger Delta gives me nightmares — Yar'Adua

By Emeka Mmah

**P**RESIDENT Umaru Musa Yar'Adua yesterday said that the Niger Delta crisis gives him administration nightmares. He regretted that the crisis in the region had become a major concern to the Federal Government as it poses a serious threat to the economy and scaring away investors from the Niger Delta.

The president spoke through Vice President Goodluck Jonathan in Kaduna at the passing out parade (POP) of officer-cadets of the 56<sup>th</sup> regular course of the Nigerian Defence Academy, NDA.

Yar'Adua, however, praised the armed forces for their roles in international peace operations as well as helping government in curtailing crises in different parts of the country, saying that the Federal Government is committed to ensuring virtue and truly professional armed forces in the country.

He urged the military to remain faithful to their oath of allegiance and avoid acts

that would endanger democracy in particular and the nation at large.

In words, "The Niger Delta situation continues to be a major concern facing this government. While acknowledging the nightmares it gives us and the challenges facing the people of the Niger Delta, we must not allow the activities of a few criminal minds to create a permanent state of insecurity in the region, destroy the economy and scare away investors."

"The military is a beacon of hope that with right

*Continues on page 6*

Govt  
side

## NIGER-DELTA



\*Yar'Adua



\*Okumagba



\*Clark

# 'Oil War': No end in sight

\*"We'll not listen this time around..." says MEND  
\*Clark begs, wants Okah released  
\*Nigeria's oil export falls, loses 600,000 bpd  
\*Okumagba may be appointed N'Delta minister

Rebuffed by Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger delta (MEND) the region's elders led by the Ijaw leader, Chief Edwin Clark begging for peace. Minister of Special Duties (Presidency), Elder Godsway Orubebe swore that the Yar'Adua government meant well for the Niger-Delta. And in order not to miss the target, Chief Clark and other Niger-Delta elders have spread their tentacles since Tuesday night, calling some of the militant leaders on phone and appealing to them to hold fire and give the Federal Government a chance to execute its agenda for the region with the new Ministry. The octogenarian had confirmed to newsmen at his country home, Kigbodo in Delta State, the next day, Tuesday, September 16, that he had very useful interaction with some of the MEND leaders and was proceeding to Abuja afterward to meet with President Yar'Adua on the way forward.

By Emma Analze

## Bombshell for Clark

Clark had told newsmen categorically, "I am happy to say that I have spoken to the boys to drop the idea of full scale war in the Niger-Delta to allow peace to reign and allow dialogue between the elders and Federal Government and to

enable the Federal Government to execute its programme of development in the Niger-Delta. I am confident that they will call off their declaration of war as from today (September 16)."

That explains Clark's shock when he got to know that MEND was ready to listen to the elders and he urged *Saturday Vanguard* to convey his position to the "boys" if conceivably they were misconstruing the intention of the elders.

"One of the things we are

pleading with the Federal Government is for the release of Henry Okah. You cannot force the release of Okah through war. We (elders) are appealing that they should lay down their arms to enable us carry on with our dialogue with the government."

"I have called on the Federal Government to declare truce in the area between now and 31st December, 2008 in order to enable the Federal Government discuss with the people and to carry out the massive development of the Niger-

Delta. If you cannot listen to your elders, who will you listen to? What that means is that the elders have no power to negotiate on their behalf and I think that is not good for the region", he said.

The Ijaw leader said that Henry Okah was not likely to be released if there was no peace in the region and the much-needed development might not come either. He, therefore, appealed to the MEND to allow peace reign between now

December 31 the elders have proposed to see whether the Federal Government would release Okah and grant amnesty to militants.

His words, "I am appealing to the Federal Government to release Henry Okah and grant amnesty to

all the militant leaders as recently agreed by our negotiating team and the Federal Government. In fact, a list of all militants that should be granted amnesty has been submitted to the Federal Government".

Move by some Niger-Delta elders led by Ijaw leader, Chief Edwin Clark, to stop the Movement for Emancipation of the Niger-Delta (MEND) from prosecuting its 'oil war', in the region has been snubbed by the militants.

The lagged, "Hurricane Barbarossa", the 'oil war' was declared, last Sunday, September 14, by MEND following an alleged JTF attack on one of its camps in Rivers State.

Meanwhile, a source, quoting the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) said, "The NNPC has revealed that in just five days of the 'oil war' a total of 600,000 bpd had been shut-in, bringing

the nation's export down to 1.5m bpd, and this is just in Rivers alone."

MEND last June 22 declared a unilateral cease-fire, effective Tuesday, June 24, as a result of the plea by the elders to allow them to dialogue with the Federal Government. MEND had also warned that any attack on its location during the period by the military would tantamount to war. But it called it off, two weeks after, accusing British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown of promising at the G8 Summit to support the Nigerian Government in ending violence in the Niger-Delta. However, it did not declare any war.

Spokesman of the MEND, Jomo Gbomo, in an exclusive reply via electronic mail to an inquiry by *Saturday Vanguard* on the peace move by Chief Clark said, "We will not listen to him (Clark) this time with all due respect. A hurricane must run its full circle before down grading to a tropical storm."

Clark, who was in Abuja, last Wednesday to meet with the Chief of Defence Staff and Service Chiefs and possibly with President Umaru Yar'Adua for them to order their men to suspend further hostility with the militants, was jolted by the militant's rejection of his moves.

Saying it was unbelievable that the militants were speaking in different voices, as he spoke with some of their leaders and got assurances that they would cease-fire before he proceeded to Abuja to hold a meeting with the Chief of Defence Staff and others.

Clark, who spoke on phone with *Saturday Vanguard*, Thursday, September 18, said, "I am here in Abuja in respect of the discussions I had with the boys on the way forward and I expect that they should listen to the elders of the region. If they don't listen to their elders, who will they listen to?"

He said it would be bad if they said they were rebuffing the peace moves of the elders, pointing out that if they said so, "it means they have rejected our representation, because we would not be here representing those that do not listen to the advice of their elders."

## Ethnic s nationalities meet on Ministry

A lot of other Niger-Deltas and indeed, Nigerians, were alarmed, during the week that instead of galvanising support for the Federal Government as intended, the probably most popular steps taken so far by the President Umaru Yar'Adua government on the Niger-Delta since it came on board, was causing more than a passing hiccup to the system.

Last weekend, at the meeting in Warri, Delta State of the Conference of Ethnic Nationalities of the Niger-Delta, led by the national chairman of the Ijaw National Congress (INC), Prof Kinsie Okoko, tension enveloped the atmosphere at the gathering over the creation of Ministry of Niger-Delta. While Okoko and some others supported the new ministry, deputy premier of the defunct Midwest region, Chief James Okoko kicked against it. He found an ally in the chairman of the Ethnic Nationalities Movement (ENM), Solomon Asenota (SAN), who declared at the meeting that the Ministry was illegal and should be challenged in court. Erudite scholar and member of the Ledum Mitee-led technical committee, Prof Benedict Iromah also maintained that the Ministry was a diversionary strategy by the government from the true federalism the people have determinedly canvassed. It took some craftsmanship to deflate the already

Continued on page 10



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FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

## VIEW

### ICJ Not Filed

stand-off between Virgin Nigeria and the Federal Government over the relocation of domestic flights to the new airport in Lagos, as MMA2, its flights will be moved this morning, 48 hours after the FC decided its relocation at the national wing. On three occasions, the airline had been ordered to leave the government's claims on the lawsuit on the late 2005, but had not been moved. Truly, the had, in 2005, moved into an agreement with its parent company, Virgin Atlantic, to allow it to run its domestic operations in the international wings of the nation's airports. Virgin was determined to force its acclamation, but the government raised the issue of national security importance, which supersedes the argument for the airline's relocation. In fact, cases of hijacking increased in 2007. Virgin should be criticised for choosing to obey the directive. It has little or nothing to lose. Government can now fashion out an agreement with Virgin Atlantic that would allow it to handle sensitive national security matters without any incumbrance.

## Security Beefed Up As Bakassi Goes To Cameroon

FROM EDEM EDEM, CALABAR, ANDREW OOTA, PHILIP NYAM, ABUJA AND ABDUL-AZIZ AHMAD ABDUL-AZIZ, KANO

► *Nigeria can disregard ICJ – Yadudu*

It was set last night as both the Federal Government and the Cross River State government prepared for the final arrangements to officially hand over the disputed Bakassi peninsula to the Cameroonian government today.

Our correspondents gathered that heavily armed security agents, comprising of soldiers, the State Security Service and mobile police men, have been deployed to the area for a smooth ceremony.

The action of the government, according to a senior security official last night, was informed by the threat by a militant group to thwart the exercise.

"We are fully ready for the ceremony, our men have been deployed to the area. I will advise the militants, to stay off the

*Continued on page 2*

# Security Beefed Up As Bakassi Goes To Cameroon

Continued from front page

ceremony in their own interest," the official stated.

Apparently to prevent any security lapses, members of the SSF were seen accosting journalists at the handover.

At the Cross River State Ministry of Information and Public Relations, several security officials were seen on foot in a cordoned-off area, simply handing over to journalists some containing

names of journalists, data and other information (names, dates, times, where, etc.) and professional credentials.

In conclusion, the SSF on this occasion did not allow any of the journalists to enter the area and they were not allowed to enter the area.

From all indications, some journalists may have to get themselves to Bakassi, which are some nautical miles across the sea.

As at 5.15pm yesterday, no government functionaries were on ground to meet the journalists on the next line of action. Newsmen were in a dilemma as to what would be the next protocol.

Newsman who are not financially buoyant will have to share rooms with their colleagues who are based in Calabar, while others have checked into hotels.

At the accreditation desk, local, national and international media men were seen being accredited. They thanked God for safe arrival and promised to cover the event with zeal and vigour.

Meanwhile, the Senate has said that the hand-over could still be completed. Addressing reporters yesterday, the Speaker, Chief Justice, Justice Ayegba, said, "You know, that we have a committee that has been working on it and will be like over-riding the issue."

As I said in some of the interviews, the issue of Bakassi is a very delicate issue. We must handle it with a lot of caution. I listened to a professor of Law analyzing the thing and I cannot but agree with him.

"We have to choose between being a bad boy of the international community by refusing to hand over Bakassi. But we have already found ourselves there. Nigeria initiated the legal action."

"We took the matter to the ICJ. If we did not believe in the

Bakassi is not really very heavily taken with mineral deposits as alleged.

What actually are the issues is number one, the welfare of our people in that place, whether government has done enough to rehabilitate the people and

assist in their suffering.

The item that came out of the agreement is that our account should be the Cameroon government's responsibility to the Nigerian military forces.

That has been the major security issue that was raised and that has been addressed in the Green Tree Agreement.

One other point that people have spoken about is the treaty and the domestication processes like this are not things you can complete in a day.

"When you hand over, you have to take care of creating or renaming the Bakassi Local Government as enshrined in the third schedule of the constitution and initiate the process of domesticating the treaty because actually, the government could have gone ahead to implement the ICJ judgement without treaty but since the Green Tree Agreement has been brought in, that treaty aspect is to be handled by the National Assembly."

Eze, however, said the hand-over cannot be complete without the ratifications of the Senate.

His words, "I believe that this hand-over can never be said to have been completed until all these processes have been completed without the amendment of the constitution. I believe the President is a man that is committed to the rule of law. He has a judgement on his

lips.

"Nigeria is a signatory to the ICJ. Nigeria is a responsible member of the international community. Nigeria is an aspiring member of Security Council. Some have to put all these into a basket. We have boxed ourselves into a tight corner."

"What the President is doing is being careful by making sure that we don't jeopardize the overall international interest and obligations of Nigeria on account of this unfortunate but avoidable mess in Bakassi. But we have already found ourselves there. Nigeria initiated the legal action."

"We took the matter to the ICJ. If we did not believe in the

way it was going, we should have pulled out, but we did not do that.

What was there and the judgement handed on our lap and we woke up and this is a delicate matter and Nigeria should see it as such."

There is nobody who is happy that any territory of Nigeria is going away. I know that even when Southern Cameroon left, there was a hospital in the country.

So, I believe we have watched what is happening between Nigeria and Liberia and the people of Liberia have gone through a lot of experience of war in the country and it is not a country that is at all difficult but every nation wants to be sure that you fight only wars that are necessary."

However, the former Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Cooperation and Integration in Africa, Hon. Sada Soli, has expressed regret over the development even as he appealed to the people of the area to accept the decision in good faith.

Soli, who spoke to newsmen yesterday in Abuja, said it was painful that the country would lose some of its territory.

The government of President Yar'Adua has no option but to abide by the ruling of the ICJ, he said.

"I am not happy that we are losing Bakassi and other villages and towns in Ikom State. It's only natural but then, what do we do?"

We went to court, to the level of International Court of Justice and then we lost the case. Again, we allowed ourselves to go into an agreement in order to implement the judgement of the ICJ. We appended our signature and agreed with all terms of the agreement. We have done that and we have implemented the agreement up to the point that we are concluding everything, what do we do in this circumstance?"

"To be fair to this government, what can it do? Can this government abrogate that agreement? Remember, it's a country that went to the International Court of Justice and we lost that case. What do you expect Nigeria to do?"

He said there was no need for Nigeria to go to war over the Bakassi issue, explaining that the matter between Cameroon and Nigeria over Bakassi was different from the Israeli-Palestinian problem.

"Our history and the

and Cameroons is completely different. So, don't compare us with that Israeli."

"When you say that you only lose territory through war, that is a completely wrong and myopic thinking."

Tell us face it, let us be sympathetic with this government. This government has lost some land and you know government is a continuous thing. It is not that they won't go through with this Green Tree Agreement, government does not operate that way."

According to Soli, who represents Ikom/Katsina local constituency in Katsina State, the injunction of a Federal High Court on the hand-over of Bakassi cannot take precedence over the judgement of the ICJ.

"I don't think that court has jurisdiction to make that statement. Look, I don't know which court is higher, but common sense will show that International Court of Justice is higher

than this court which gave the injunction."

He appealed to Nigerians to be patient with the Yar'Adua government, arguing that the Bakassi mistake was committed by the previous administration but there is need to look forward.

"I think Nigerians are very nice people, they are the nicest people on earth, they are very forgiving. I think they should be able to forgive all the mistakes that the previous government has made so that we can move on. The people of Bakassi, the people of Cameroon, remember, we are all the same people but for the treaty of the Berlin conference. But whatever happens, we all have to move forward."

But a legal luminary and constitutional lawyer, Professor Aiwah Lamisa Yabudu, said yesterday that Nigeria could disregard the ruling of the ICJ over the cession of the Bakassi peninsula.

Yabudu, who spoke to LEADERSHIP last night in

Kano, said the issue had been decided by the court and the judgement was final.

According to him, the decision is what the court has said and it is not for us to decide not to implement it.

Yabudu, a former Presidential Adviser on Legal Matters, said further, "Nigeria has a choice to make. It can either accept the decision or not. If it does not accept the decision, it will be in violation of the Green Tree Agreement."

He said, "If we accept the decision, we will be in violation of the Green Tree Agreement. If we do not accept the decision, we will be in violation of the Green Tree Agreement."

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## Goodbye Bakassi; here is why — Orubebe

By Emma Ujah & Luka Blumyat

ABUJA — AS Nigeria hands over the Bakassi

Peninsula to Cameroon today, Special Duties Minister, Elder, Godday Orubebe, whose duty is to ensure a hitch-free ceremony, has said

the Federal Government has to respect its agreement on the peninsula as a responsible member of the international community.

He said in an exclusive interview with Vanguard in Abuja, that Nigeria entered

Continues on Page 5

**TODAY**  
**NYANNA**  
Amaechi's  
N100bn agony



Nigeria solves her domestic problems through force only. It responds only to the language of force

**MOORENINE**  
The structure of corruption



The most pressing task before the EFCC leadership as well as all stakeholders at the moment is to build structural checks and balances that will ensure, no matter who is at the helm of its affairs, uniformity, freedom, fairness and justice

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**INSIDE**  
**Bakassi: The genesis, the verdict**

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**Ribadu: Nat'l Assembly summons Okoro, Osayande**

— PAGE 6

# Goodbye Bakassi



**BAKASSI. WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?:** What does the future hold for me? Could this be the thought of this young Bakassi native at Ikang Resettlement Camp, Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Cross River State as Nigeria hands over the peninsula to Cameroon today? Photo: Abayomi Adeshida.

- Senate okays handover
- UN scribe hails action
- Ceremony holds at Abana

By Emmanuel Aziken & Inulegwu Shalun with agency reports

ABUJA — THE most contentious obstacle to Nigeria's transfer of the Bakassi Peninsula was removed yesterday, after the Senate gave President Umaru Yar'Adua the go-ahead to proceed with the hand-over.

Not a few Nigerians had drawn the attention of the Federal Government to its failure, up to yesterday, to obtain the approval of the Senate in ceding the Peninsula as required by Section 13 of the 1999 Constitution.

The section says: "No treaty between the Federation and any other country shall have the force of law except to the extent to which any such treaty has been enacted into law by the National Assembly."

Indeed, the endorsement was the reason for the resumption from recess, yesterday, by the Senate.

Just before the Senate gave the green light yesterday, the opposition Action Congress (AC) had issued a statement, asking the Federal Govern-

ment to defer the handover "if indeed the government believes in its own rule of law and due process mantra."

Explaining the Senate action, following a closed door session, its spokesman, Chief Ayogu Eze, blamed the procedure adopted by the Okunjo administration for the situation the country now found itself.

He argued that Nigeria could not

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# NEWS

## Goodbye Bakassi

Continues from Page 1

afford to renege on its international obligations, stressing that the Senate was satisfied with considerations provided for in the Green Tree Agreement on the welfare of displaced persons from the area. He also expressed satisfaction that the agreement had been dressed in a way that would not impede the country's military interests in the eastern Tana.

Senator Eze, all the same, expressed the Senate's doubts at the loss of a part of the country, Nigeria, according to him, is obliged by its commitments to abide by both the ruling of the International Court of Justice and the following Green Tree Agreement.

Senator Eze who also said a fresh draft of the Freedom of Information Bill (FoI) would soon be presented to the Senate for consideration, said: "Nigeria is a responsible member of the international community. Nigeria is an aspiring member of the Security Council. So we have to put all these into a basket."

"We put ourselves in a tight corner. What the President is doing is being careful by making sure that we don't jeopardise the overall international interests and obligations of Nigeria on account of this unfortunate but avoidable mess in Bakassi."

But we have already found ourselves there. Nigeria initiated the legal action. We took the matter to the ICJ. If we did not believe in the authority of ICJ, we should not have gone to court in the first place.

"This is a delicate matter and Nigerians should see it as such. There is nobody who is happy that any territory of Nigeria is going away. I know that even when southern Cameroon left, there was a hoopla in the country," Eze said as he called for caution against intensification of violence.

Giving the assurances received by the Senate on the issue, he said: "We have already been assured contrary to speculations that that part of Bakassi is not really very heavy with mineral deposits as alleged."

Besides giving the country's determination to sustaining the welfare of the citizens of that area, he noted the assurances given on the protection of the country's military interests in the area.

"The item that consumed the agreement split on that on no account should Cameroon constitute an impediment to Nigerian military forces having access or exit from Bakassi into the Nigerian water. That has been the major security issue that was raised and that has been addressed in the Green Tree Agreement," he said.

**AC asks FG to defer Bakassi handover**

Earlier yesterday, the Action Congress (AC) asked the Federal Government to defer to a later date the planned handover today of the Bakassi peninsula to Cameroon. "If indeed the government believes in

its own rule of law and due process, it must."

In a statement in Abuja, in a National Publicity Secretary of the AC, Abasi Lai Mohammed, said the delay would give the government time to submit the Green Tree Agreement to the National Assembly for ratification, thereby ensuring that the laws of Nigeria are not breached just to satisfy the international community.

AC said it backed the argument that the handover of the peninsula to Cameroon would be in vain if the Yar'Adua administration failed to seek the ratification, by the National Assembly, of the agreement it signed in New York with Cameroon over the implementation of the 2002 ruling of International Court of Justice (ICJ).

It said Section 12(1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was unambiguous: "No treaty between the Federation and any other country shall have the force of law except to the extent to which any such treaty has been enacted into law by the National Assembly."

The party said if the Yar'Adua administration failed to follow the country's Constitution and went ahead to hand over Bakassi to Cameroon today, it would have broken the country's laws and set the stage for the endorsement of arbitrariness and expediency over rule of law and due process.

"Even if the government has scoffed at the ruling of Justice Muhammad Umar of the Federal High Court sitting in Abuja, re-stating the FG from handing over the peninsula until the determination of the case brought by Bakassi indigenes, it cannot afford to trash the Nigerian Constitution. The temptation to go ahead with the handover, just to win some immediate favours from the international community, especially by an administration that is standing on one foot, is so great. But succumbing to it will bring more pain than joy at the end."

"We, therefore, join well-meaning Nigerians and organisations to appeal to the Yar'Adua administration to do the right thing before handing over Bakassi, in line with the ICJ ruling. Nothing is sacrosanct about August 14 that it cannot be deferred," AC said.

**Handover holds in Abana**

Today's handover is taking place at Abana, former headquarters of Bakassi Local Government.

The choice of Abana, according to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), was made after an intense security meeting on Tuesday between Cross River Government officials and the Presidency.

It was not clear yesterday the exact place in Abana where the event would take place.

Chief Florence Ita-Giwa, Chairman of Bakassi Resettlement Committee, could not confirm the venue on Tuesday but the Secretary to the Cross River State Government, Mr. Fidelis Ugbo, in a statement confirmed Abana as venue of the ceremony.

The statement, issued on Tuesday, explained that the handover was in keeping with the judgement of the International Court of

Justice at The Hague and in line with Nigeria's desire to maintain its leadership position in Africa.

"It is also for the country to ensure peace and good neighbourliness in the continent and the world," the statement added.

It said the Federal Government believed in the rule of law and appealed to the displaced people of Bakassi and other ethnic nationalities to remain calm.

"We urge you all to remain calm and cooperate with the federal and state governments to ensure a smooth and memorable handover ceremony," said the statement.

It reminded the people that they were known to be peaceful and hospitable and should live up to the rating. The statement also assured Bakassi people of the state government's desire to integrate all Nigerians in the area into the economy "by providing ample opportunity for those willing to promote enterprise."

The government also commended traditional rulers, political stalwarts and leaders of thought of Bakassi people for their understanding over the matter.

**Ban Ki-moon hails handover**

The handover is expected to put an end to a 15-year dispute over the territory believed to contain considerable oil and gas reserves.

Last week, the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon hailed Nigeria's upcoming transfer as "a model for negotiated settlements of border disputes," saying it would be "a landmark event."

Nigeria agreed to transfer Bakassi, which sits into the Gulf of Guinea, two years ago but sporadic gun battles and political and legal disagreements have delayed.

A Cameroon government official said today's transfer marked "the end of a crisis" that began in December 1993 when the Nigerian army occupied a number of villages on the peninsula.

Cameroon first took its case to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague in March 1994. After a drawn-out legal battle, the ICJ ruled in October 2002 that the Bakassi peninsula be given to Cameroon.

It based its decision largely on a 1913 treaty between former colonial powers Britain and Germany.

Cameroon and Nigeria then signed an accord, known as the Green Tree Agreement, in New York in June 2006 during US-facilitated mediation talks and in the presence of then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

This paved the way for Nigeria's withdrawal from Bakassi, which is expected to be completed in a flag-exchanging ceremony today.

But the handover has been threatened by last-minute legal challenges and a number of deadly attacks.

Last month, a federal court in Abuja granted an injunction preventing the government from handing over Bakassi to Cameroon by its agreed deadline.

Despite the move, President Umaru Yar'Adua insisted Nigeria would not abandon its international obligations.

The peninsula, which is believed to contain considerable oil and gas reserves as well as rich fishing grounds, has also been the scene of violent attacks in recent months.

Approximately 30 people have been killed in recent clashes between Cameroonian soldiers and local armed groups opposed to the transfer in the peninsula that spans 1,000 square kilometres.

Last month, the Niger Delta Defence and Security Council (NDDSC) claimed responsibility for an attack in Korojo, Abana, in which 12 people died, including

two Cameroonian soldiers.

The armed Nigerian group threatened further violence unless the transfer of Bakassi is postponed.

Although the peninsula's official population size is not known, it is thought most of its inhabitants are Nigerian, while Cameroonians make up the majority of the civil servants and military personnel.

A school head in Akwa, a Cameroon locality from where you can see Nigeria, said he welcomed the transfer. "We are looking forward to August 14 with a lot of hope," Bernard Ambebo said.

**Continues from Page 1**

into the Green Tree Agreement voluntarily and that as such the only responsible thing to do was to respect it.

His words: "Nigeria as a nation cannot stand on its own. We were not forced to agree in the first place that whatever decision was taken by the International Court of Justice would be acceptable. We were not forced. We went to the court voluntarily, submitted ourselves to the international court. Don't forget Nigeria is a nation that is always saying we want a permanent seat in the Security Council; we want to be called the big brother of Africa, to be the leader of Africa. We weighed all these things."

"As the President of a country, with the people of that country, we went to the international community to say yes; we agree with the judgement. There are a lot of things Nigeria wanted to hear or get from the international community and tomorrow, for one reason or the other, somebody is saying that we will not obey what has been decided by the international community. Don't forget the convention, the Treaty."

The signing of the agreement was witnessed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. And today we say we are not giving it to Cameroon. Ask yourself the question: what do we stand to gain and what do we stand to lose? As a nation, are we going to be taken seriously? "Don't forget, we are talking about an area, an area of which over 80 per cent is already in the hands of Cameroon. Over 80 per cent of the area has been handed over to Cameroon already by the last government. Yes, they (Cameroon)



## Goodbye Bakassi — Orubebe

to come in, I'm not a lawyer but can a Federal High Court Federal High Court of a nation decide over an International Court of Justice? It's like say a Federal High Court can decide over a decision of a Supreme Court of Nigeria. Can a Federal High Court decide over the highest court of the world? This is to say there is no activity that take place if the Federal High Court of any country can take a decision," he said.

The minister advised if people displaced from Bakassi, this is to say it is a human oriented government. The President will not disappoint them and Nigerians. He swears to the Constitution of Nigeria to protect the lives of Nigerians and Mr. President will everything to ensure that Nigerians are not abandoned.

"And it's to that level it has given directives to local committee, which chaired by the Governor Cross River State, to ensure that everything is put in place to accommodate those people that are coming over as at 14th and of course the local committee and the Federal Government that chaired by the Cross River State governor, we are doing our statutory roles, have visited the place, number of times and I think that two, three days to time, we are going to relocate to Calabar to ensure that gaitians are given the place that they have a government that cares for them," he said.

On efforts to resettle people of Bakassi, he said: "Resettlement is not something you can just fix, cause a lot of issues will Government is preparing of resources to ensure our people are not a done."

"That's one aspect I want to come in, I'm not a lawyer but can a Federal High Court Federal High Court of a nation decide over an International Court of Justice? It's like say a Federal High Court can decide over a decision of a Supreme Court of Nigeria. Can a Federal High Court decide over the highest court of the world? This is to say there is no activity that take place if the Federal High Court of any country can take a decision," he said.

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**JUST A THOUGHT**  
By Sope Johnson

**Cultism in our tertiary institutions**

There are many reasons why cultism should flourish in our colleges. The urgent question is how effectively to expunge it altogether in these institutions. There is talk of promulgating laws that will tackle the problem. If they are to be effective, the laws to be promulgated must be firm and be upheld in all the institutions. There must be no sacred cows. The laws must be seen to be expulsive.



## ISSUES

## \* Niger Deltans Are Parasites Too

By Bashir Yunusa

**A**sari Dokubo, the self-styled emancipator of Niger Delta, was reported by the *Daily Sun* of Friday, July 4, 2008 to have warned ACF on the Niger Delta crisis. In the report, Dokubo rained abuses and poured vituperations on Northern people. He blamed them for the crisis in the area and called them parasites on account that it is the oil revenue from the area that is used to develop by the whole country. There is need to quickly remind him that both the South-West and South-East are equally dependent on oil revenue from that area.

In Nigeria, each of the six geo-political zones is endowed with abundant resources, which necessitate them to pursue interdependence. So, if the Niger Delta has large oil reserves, the entire North can also boast of solid minerals and most importantly, agriculture. The agricultural produce is not only consumed by the producers only; a larger part is transported to other areas, including the Niger Delta. So wherever you go throughout the North, markets have been established for the purchase of farm produce. On daily basis, people from Niger Delta with trucks buy from these markets. For instance, in Plateau State, there is Irish potato market, where you can purchase as many bags as you can. The people of Benue, Taraba and Adamawa are good farmers of yam, rice and cassava. The people of Kano, Katsina and Kaduna are good farmers of cereals while cattle are moved from Borno to Niger Delta to serve as meat and *pomo*. Fish, another important food, come from the North. So the list of items transported to that region is unexhaustible.

The *Daily Sun* reported Dokubo to have said that they did not have any share in the money the North made from groundnut pyramids. That is not for him to tell because, he was not born then. But one certain thing is that the money realised from groundnut pyramids was partly used to build, at least, some of the earliest oil wells discovered between sixties and seventies. Even if this is not so, the only source of power supply to the whole country within the period was Kainji Dam in the North. The dam supplied electricity that was used in installing all oil equipment during the period. Imagine what would have happened if the Nupes and other tribes in the area attacked electrical pylons and cables that carried light to the Niger Delta area then. Let me say without mincing words that, the people of Niger Delta had benefited from the groundnut pyramids and will continue to benefit from it as long as they exist, except if Dokubo is saying that the groundnut oil used daily in meals and

from oil wells.

It is unfortunate that such arrogant outburst against Northerners was long being promoted by the Lagos-Ibadan press axis. This got to the peak in 1999 at the time the country was trying to transit from military rule to civilian rule. Most of their writings at that period revolved around power shift. Northerners were berated and unsuspecting readers were misinformed that the North had nothing to contribute to the development of Nigeria. The whole problems of the country which manifested in the form of maladministration and hyper corruption that pervaded the entire society was heaped on Northerners. They agitated for breakage of the country peacefully or in war situation as in the former Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia respectively.

With the inception of the last administration, its first undoing was the scrapping of PTF, which was viewed as taking over the responsibility of ministries. As a result, corruption

that they have squandered every kobo of the huge sum of money allocated to them is not unfounded. This is not meant to exonerate Northern governors from embezzlement of public fund. Far from that. They are equally good in pocketing allocation allocated to them. Apart from the mouthily grant, states in the Niger Delta further benefit from derivation fund, so that the annual budget of any one of these states by far exceeds what 3 or 4 states in the North put together. Therefore, the abject poverty evident in the area is a product of massive corruption by their leaders and the refusal by the youth to accept employments reserved for them by oil companies. To them, taking appointment and waiting for 30 days to collect salary is not profitable. They rather prefer to kidnap foreign workers or their own people and be paid ransom, which usually runs into millions of naira. Once they are paid, the

**The money realised from groundnut pyramids was partly used to build, at least, some of the earliest oil wells discovered between sixties and seventies. Even if this is not so, the only source of power supply to the whole country within the period was Kainji**

**Dam in the North**

became the major projects embarked upon in government ministries; huge sums of money were diverted to private pockets. In the power sector only, as huge as 16 billion dollars contract was awarded without a scratch on the ground. This amount alone, when converted to naira will amount to over half of this year's now revised national budget. When the public outcry was yet to die down, Nigerians were further told that over 900 billion naira was also discovered to have been expended on transport ministry with nothing to show for it. So if probe is to be extended further to other ministries, more shocking revelations will be made such that the affairs in the health ministry would look like a child's play.

There are those who believe that PTF concentrated its projects in the north only. I don't think this is true because, at least, I can cite one high-way project from Lokoja to Ogori-Magongo, and then through the South-West and down to Lagos to support my view. So I believe there are many other projects carried out in the South as in the North.

The accusation leveled

whole money end up in beer palours or obituary festivities popularly called "obutu" where they drink *Ogogoro*, *kayin-kayin*, *sapele water* or *pushi me-I pushi you*.

Resource control has been one of the major demands of leaders of the Niger Delta and I fully support that they should take full control of on-shore oil only as the Supreme Court has already ruled that off-shore oil belongs to all Nigerians. After all, out of about 300 countries in the world, only about 30 or a little above have oil. Some that even have don't rely on it solely. For instance, the industrialised nations rely on arm sales and manufacturing industries. Some others depend on dairy products while others on agricultural produce as sources of foreign exchange.

The environmental degradation in the Niger Delta is very regrettable and shouldn't have been allowed to reach such deplorable condition. But the answer to the problems does not lie in taking control of the oil wells.

Bashir Yunusa,  
Department of Social

## FEATURES

Editor: Judith Ukeke

### I have a win-win formula for the Niger Delta — Idika Kalu

Dr. Kalu Idika Kalu, who was recently appointed to replace Prof. Ibrahim Gambari as Chairman of the proposed Niger Delta Summit, needs no introduction. Kalu has worked as Country Economist in the East Asia and Pacific Programme Department of the World Bank. He later served as a member of the Development Committee of the same bank. Kalu has also served as the Chairman, Board of Governors, African Development Bank. His public sector career in Nigeria commenced when he served as Commissioner for Finance and Economic Planning in old Imo State. At the federal level, he served as the Minister of Finance on two occasions, from 1983-1986 and 1993-1994. He served as the Minister of National Planning from 1986-1987 and later as Minister of Transport from 1987-1989. He spoke to Okey Ndiribe on his vision for the Niger Delta.

**WHAT** do you think should be the way forward in the Niger Delta?

This is a very important question which I have been very much involved with. This is because it falls squarely into my training as a development economist and public finance specialist. During my tenure as Commissioner for Finance in the old Imo State and my two term tenure as Minister of Finance, I have been very intimately involved with issues of revenue allocation, fiscal management, economic development based on optimal revenue mobilisation, both within and outside the country.

I dealt with the Niger Delta question at a very early stage as a Minister of National Planning. At that time, funds allocated to the region were being discussed in respect of projects they would be used for in Lagos but I felt this was not proper. I proposed that the funds be moved to the region itself where the people could decide what they wanted to do with whatever was allocated to them. This was what led to the setting up of the Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC), which subsequently, gave rise to the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).

I know that right from the Willinks Commission, all kinds of commissions have been set up and studies conducted about the region. But, we can see that the whole problem is easily the most sore point in the nation's economic landscape. I believe that the Niger Delta Summit is really a chance for us to tackle this problem once and for all. It should not just be a matter of percentage of revenue allocated to the region but how to use the resources of the Niger Delta and that of the nation optimally in order to ensure that there is a groundswell of development in the region. I believe this is how most people in the Niger Delta see it. It is not just a matter of oil and gas but also that of many other raw materials, a lot of which are going bad because of oil and gas exploration in the region. I have a totally different approach which I consider a win-win approach for addressing the Niger Delta problem. What is required is for the Government to come out with a very concrete plan; not just having billions of Naira and talking about bulk allocation. We have to go back to very detailed planning, which will involve the Niger Delta.

The projects have to be properly identified. From agricultural projects to processing, manufacturing, petrochemicals and the aromatics, heavy infrastructure, power, railways and roads; education, health, the environment and coastal shipping — the whole works. All these issues have to be addressed with concrete medium and long term projects.

The other angle which we have really fallen flat on is to get the actual magnitude of the funds that would be required to implement the medium and long term projects. I would like to sketch out the various sources of funds. This is because one of the problems that have stalled development in the Niger Delta is that we have not really addressed it properly.

It is true that there has been corruption like in other parts of the country. It is also true that there have been leakages. In trying to mobilise the proper magnitude of resources, all of these things have to be taken into consideration. This is why I feel it is important this win-win agenda is placed before the Nigerian public.

We should stop looking at the Niger Delta as only a Niger Delta problem. We should stop looking at the problem as that of "we give them so much and so much is left for the rest". We should see it as a catalyst for general economic development. I have mentioned the funds, but the manpower and materials that would be required would need to come from other parts of the country to assist the people of the Niger Delta. Professionals from other parts of the world would also be required to build the Niger Delta and raise it to the level of what you see in oil producing regions of the world — in the Middle East, Far East, Latin America and the Americas generally.

These places are some of the wealthiest places in the world. Even the little glimpses we are seeing in Angola indicates that they are on the right track because they are really using their resources to build that country. This is a far cry from what we have seen in the Niger Delta; where there is a very unhealthy environment; where there is deforestation; the situation in which the people live remains pitiful. It is a place where people still live in shacks; where there is no access; where there is disease; contamination of water and fishing grounds. The knowledge to transform the area is available. We should also plan based on the projection that there is still potential for gas. We should build on the



Dr. Kalu Idika Kalu: "One of the problems that have stalled development in the Niger Delta is that we have not really addressed it properly"

proper quality of structures, whether it is schools or hospitals, or bridges or whatever; it should be first class.

In specifying the Niger Delta, one has observed lately an attempt to divide the place. Some people are already talking about coastal states and oil producing states. Some states are being looked at as if they are not really part of the Niger Delta. It should include all the area from the Anambra Basin right down to the Delta. Besides states like Cross River, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Abia, Imo, Bayelsa, Delta, Edo and Ondo, it should also include the Anambra Basin because it is supposed to be very rich in gas.

So, we should look at the entire region without segregation. But then, when you get to Bayelsa or Rivers, everybody knows that the gas and oil wells are there. So, there is no question as to where the impact is most strongly felt. If you are looking at regional development, then you would need to look at the whole Niger Delta Basin for the purpose of development.

Secondly, we would really need to involve engineers, doctors and other professionals from all over the

country. So, we shouldn't really look at it from the point of view of funds that are allocated to the Niger Delta that does not affect the rest of the country. In line with global planning, we would then ensure that the quality of schools and hospitals that are built in the Niger Delta would be replicated in other parts of the country. Other parts of the country are part of the sovereign entity called Nigeria. Even outside the Niger Delta, this effort should provide the opportunity to build adequate number of schools in Nasarawa, Oam and other parts of the country. But, how do we fund it?

When you talk about the Niger Basin, where exactly do you mean?

When I talk about the Niger Basin, I mean the entire stretch of territory through which the River Niger passes. I mean the entire area below the confluence of the Niger and Benue Rivers. We should look at the confluence. When you are doing transportation, you don't look at only shipping, it has to include all types of transportation. We should take the regional development away from politics. We are not just looking at coastal states or oil producing states but the entire Niger Delta Basin. It is a region that requires very special treatment.

In respect of the issue of funding, it is relevant to state that, over the years, we have had all sorts of criteria for allocating oil blocks. I believe that all those who have been allocated oil blocks have to pay the commission. We need to engage the services of top accountants, financial analysts to make sure that all the funds that ought to accrue to the nation's coffers are recovered from those to whom oil blocks were allocated.

I think oil blocks should be given to those who really know and who have the resources and experience to exploit them. In the past, those oil blocks were allocated to some people who didn't know to exploit it and, for months, they didn't do anything with them. It is necessary to allocate these oil blocks to those who will exploit them immediately so that revenue is generated from them and employment would also be created both within and outside the oil producing region of the country. For those who got oil block allocations in the past, we must ensure they pay all they are supposed to pay.

Secondly, part of the resources have gone as a result of corruption, leakages and bureaucracy. I bet you by the time we tackle corruption vigorously, we would save many funds from all these leakages which should be utilised for development.

Thirdly, I have said that the reason why we have international financing is that projects could be identified that could create jobs and services. I have always queried the position that we should leave the financing of projects to only what we could generate from our resources because we don't want to borrow. A very real source of fund would be to increase our current external debt level. I know that this is not widely understood but no other country does what we are doing here. Japan has just announced it had borrowed \$18 billion which they would use to rev up their economy. But, on our part, we paid up about \$14 billion as debts when we don't have working facilities. We should go for funds but ensure they are properly supervised and used. The present situation whereby our debt level is so low is an absurdity when you consider the needs of the economy. We have to borrow in order to fund the massive development required in the Niger Delta. This would be in addition to taking advantage of the free services provided by several UN agencies for the purpose of achieving development.



## INSIDE POLITICS

# We are poised to rewrite the story of Niger Delta - Akpabio

*In recent times the media was awash with a controversy between Akwa Ibom State government and the Igbokwe. Christy Essien Igbokwe comes from Akwa Ibom state. Why is there this war of words over a printing machine for The Pioneer newspaper in Uyo. What is the cause of the quarrel?*

Christy Essien Igbokwe is a sister. I have never had any problems with her. We probably spoke last in 2002 when I was in Lagos. I used to visit them and I was close to the family. Recently, I received a letter alleging threat to her life and inside the letter, she said the life of her family and her children were being threatened. She said also: "If you go and buy a new rotary machine for The Pioneer newspaper, I will lead a protest to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for your prosecution, whether you have immunity or not."

I was shocked. I discovered later that the basis of this threat to life letter was that she does not want the state government to purchase a new rotary machine for The Pioneer newspaper. For about eight years, we have produced a sub-standard newspaper and every single Akwa Ibom child knows this. The deputy governor was himself commissioner for information, and was even the one that was supposed to commission that machine. That machine has not been commissioned till today. The machine had been very bad right from inception; it couldn't do colour, it couldn't do a lot of things despite the millions of naira expended on it.

I don't know if they supplied machines in other states and they worked, but this one was a military administration contract, which was revaluated by the last administration, and she now supplied it with her husband. I have no problem with them.

*What is the problem with the machine?*  
With that machine, to produce 10 copies of The Pioneer, you lose almost 90 copies of newspaper. We were running at a loss. It was a disaster and there was no hope. The paper has continued to live on subventions from government. So, I just couldn't understand why somebody would go and write a letter saying that her life was under threat as a result of a faulty machine they supplied to Akwa Ibom State newspaper corporation.

Inside her letter, she said that her life was being threatened. Would a state governor go and threaten the life of a contractor and her children, who had a contract with the military administration and supplied a defective machine to the government? Why would I do that? I just came in as governor. My job is to ensure that I address and redress issues, and move the state forward.

Since the federal government agreed to share 13% of earnings from the sale of crude oil among some South-South states, the financial profile of those states have improved. But this has not translated into better living conditions for the ordinary people. In this interaction with journalists, Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Barrister Godswill Akpabio vows to change that situation. Excerpts.

**By Theophilus Abba**

*ward. If I need a new machine for the state, if we can afford it, we would buy a new one, and move on. If there is an issue connected with their contract, there are agencies of government that can deal with those issues.*

If you want to run down a governor, those are not the issues you use. In fact, the State House of Assembly has instituted a committee to probe that contract and the government will not buy a new press for The Pioneer newspaper until the outcome of that investigation.

*Another issue in the state is your plan to build a new Government House. What is the justification for it when your predecessor actually used the current Government House. Why can't you use it?*

We recently signed a contract with Julius Berger to do a new governor's lodge. And as usual with certain decisions, a lot of political opponents jumped up saying there is no need for a new lodge. The previous administration had done a design to do massive renovation, but when we assessed the cost of renovation, vis-à-vis the cost of building a new one, we saw that the cost of renovation was almost N1.8 billion while a new one would cost about N2.3 billion to N2.5 billion. So, we said well, it would look like wastage of public money if we do massive renovation, which can last approximately 10 years, whereas, we can build a new one, which will last for about 50 years.

The intention is to leave a legacy behind and build something good for the people. But people tend to misunderstand it. They think the governor is after his own interest, but by the time it is finished, we may not live there, and it will be for the next administration.

The contract is broken into about three parts. The first part is the lodge itself, which is about N2.3 billion; the second part is a women centre, which will have the women affairs ministry, the office of the first lady and a banquet hall for women activities within the lodge. The third one is the fencing and other things that have been proposed.

*There are complaints generally that there is nothing on ground to justify the huge allocations you have received since you became governor?*

Nobody can say that in Akwa Ibom. We are very committed to changing things par-

ticularly the perception of governance. People use to complain that so much money had been going into the Niger Delta, but so little had been on the ground. What we want to



Governor Godswill Akpabio of Akwa Ibom State

our children for the marine industry.

In the area of road construction, I will say, we have been very ambitious. Sincerely, I don't know where we are going to get the money to build. I get frightened when I look at what we have put up. In the three senatorial districts of the state, the government has tried to open up the rural areas. In Ikot senatorial district, we have about 37 roads we are building as at now. In Oron as a local government, we have 33 roads we are building now.

In Ikot Abasi, which is almost like a master hub, where we have ALSCON (Aluminium Smelting Company of Nigeria), we are doing about 18 roads. In Uyo, of course, the projects are ongoing. At the moment, we are undertaking almost 15 internal roads in the capital.

Then we are dualising the 29 kilometre federal road that connects Cross River and Akwa Ibom states. It used to be a death trap but we are doing it, complete with streetlights. In the Ikot Ikpe axis, we are doing over 25 roads. We are dualising all the way from Uyo to the international airport.

People will see the changes when these things come on stream. And we took out time to select first class

an aware that it will create employment opportunities for over 20,000 Niger Deltans and other Nigerians. We have also started a policy of targeted education, to prepare some of

*In the Niger Delta there is the problem of insecurity. How do you plan to tackle it because without peace and security all your plans cannot work?*

We are one of the most peaceful states in the Niger Delta. You see a lot of expatriates driving their cars on the streets, and I pray it remains that way. The few incidents of violence we had were imported or do I say exported by our brother states; they were not indigenous because Akwa Ibom does not have that.

We have a policy of ensuring that the youths are partners in government. That policy has worked well for us because the youths now know that they have a future. Since I came in here, I have empowered over 150 youths in the state, either by way of appointing them as members of committees in the various local governments or directly having about 45 of them as key aides and special assistants to the governor, or putting them in other areas like cleaning the environment and all that.

You will notice that outside government vehicles, there are not many taxis in Uyo. In the next one or two weeks, we will be launching the first major taxi scheme in Uyo. We have acquired 200 brand new cars for that scheme. We are targeting about 400 in all, to ensure that next time you come, with a phone call, a taxi will be by your side and you can go anywhere in comfort.

We inherited a kind of state capital that we could call an upgraded local government headquarters and out job is to manage it into a city. We have awarded the first flyover in Uyo and in due time, if you are coming from Ikot Ikpe towards Uyo, what you will see under the bridge will like like Ojuelegba and all that.

We are not sitting down on our micro-credit financing. We are attempting to ensure that we empower the ordinary people including the youths. To this end, we are partnering with a lot of small organizations and cooperatives. For instance, we have given a loan to the tune of N100 million to the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN).

*Why CAN?*  
Good. People may want to write petitions about that. I gave CAN the money to start

companies - Julius Berger, Setraco, Mothercat and some other companies that have reputation and can achieve results.

*In the Niger Delta there is the problem of insecurity. How do you plan to tackle it because without peace and security all your plans cannot work?*

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a revolving loan scheme for people in the church and it is working well. The intention is not for the association to eat the money. It is for the poorest of the poor, who are in churches to have access to credit.

We feel we can begin to fight poverty, even using the church as a partner. But people, who like to write petition, said they didn't know why the governor would give money to the church. It wasn't for them to eat; it was for them to manage. They have a board of trustees and the scheme, right now, is touching the lives of the people.

We sent over N400 million to NAPEP (National Poverty Eradication Programme) to do the same thing but I have not seen a single petition, maybe because that one is a federal government establishment. At the end, you may be surprised that the one being handled by the church may work out better than the NAPEP version. Just when is this so much talked about Akwa Ibom international airport going to be completed?

I don't know whether I can place a deadline any longer. The main contractor we met on site is trying, but we are working with a lot of difficulties; so, I will not place deadline. But I know that we can at least have a runway at the end of this year. And the runway is such that it will land Boeing 747 and DC 10 engine. It is a futuristic airport that will be complete with an MRO (Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul) facility.

If the contractor works at the speed with which it is going, we may have problems, but if it doubles up and increases the tempo, then we should be able to have a substantial part of the airport completed by the end of this year. But on the whole, I am sure it would not be later than 2009.

*There appears to be no plan in place to boost agriculture?*

We have a lot of plans. We inherited a programme called the Integrated Farmers Scheme, which is already giving a lot of hope to Akwa Ibom people. We are investing a lot in that area through micro credit financing and we are getting results.

Agriculture still remains one area that will ensure the biggest in terms of employment opportunities. That sector is very dear to our heart, and we are doing a lot. In fact, I recently sent out my commissioners to Malaysia and other places to study palm produce. You know Akwa Ibom is within the palm produce belt and so we are completing in the next three months three major palm producing depots. We have brought in the equipment and we are laying a lot of emphasis on that. The equipment is already on ground. We will go into all sorts of things that you can do with palm produce.

# Oil war: MEND shuns N'Delta elders

Continues from Page 1

ables for their release from Anika Okah, wife of the detained MEND leader, Henry Okah.

Former Governor of Delta State, Chief James Ibori has also joined the fray, appealing to the factions to sheath their sword. He said, "If there is a season for everything under the sun as the Bible says, there is a time for war and a time for peace. Then this is the time for cessation of hostilities in the entire Niger Delta. Having heard the anguished cry of the people of the South-South, President Umaru Yar'Adua is determined to end the suffering of the people, and has therefore approved a large-scale intervention in the form of the Niger Delta ministry to reverse decades old under-development which the area has suffered."

The renewed violence was evidence that moves by some Niger Delta elders led by Ijaw leader, Chief Edwin Clark, to end the violence has been snubbed by MEND.

Tagged, *Hunan Babarara*, the oil war was declared, last Sunday, September 14, by MEND following an alleged JTF attack on one of its camps in Rivers State.

10 militants die  
"No fewer than ten militants would have lost their lives yesterday when they engaged men of the Joint Task Force (JTF) in Okrika waters. According to spokesman of the security body, Lieutenant Col. Sagor Musa the militants in eight speed boats had attempted to attack the refinery jetty but were successfully repelled by men of the JTF on ground."

Sagor said that during an exchange of fire the soldiers sank three of the speed boats belonging to the militants. And he feared that the occupants would have died. Three speed boats were sunk. Casualty figure not known. And no casualty at our end." He also dismissed as untrue allegations by the militants that they attacked a shell facility in Elen Kalabari.

Also when contacted, Mr. Precious Okolebo of Shell said he was not aware of the damage to their facility. But he quickly added that the company would still carry out check on the facility.

Meanwhile, the militants in a statement issued under the aegis of MEND said they blew up the company's facility in the community. The statement reads:

"At 1830 hrs today (Friday), September 18, 2008, fighters from the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) using high explosives have destroyed a major pipeline belonging to Shell Development Company at the Elen-Kalabari Cawthorne Channel axis in Rivers State of Nigeria."

"A gunboat patrol that happened to bump into the MEND fighters begged for their lives and showed their magazines to prove that they had not fired from their guns. They were spared and allowed to go but not after they had pledged loyalty to the struggle and denounced the criminality of the oil companies and the government. One of the soldiers actually defecated in his trousers."

"The men have returned safely to base as another team was getting set to return two South African hostages to a drop off zone."

On the two South-African hostages, he said, "The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) can categorically confirm that the two South African hostages rescued by MEND from sea pirates have been released unharmed today (yesterday) September 18, 2008."

"The duo were handed over to government secret service officials at 2300 hrs, who will in turn hand them over to representatives of the South African High Commission in Port Harcourt, Rivers State of Nigeria."

"This genuine release puts to rest speculations and anxiety to the families and the people of South Africa caused by the false statement from the obtuse spokesman of the military Joint Task Force (JTF)."

"In this case, the army had hoped to cash in on a deliberate misinformation we put out and take the credit for a role they had no part in."

"We have been wondering how foolish he must have looked when they could not produce the hostages they said were released without any ransom payment."

"With this exposure, Nigerians and the world can now see that we have a military of decent who have had about their combat losses and gains, role in extra-judicial killings, rape, genocide and oil theft," the militia group stated.

**Ibori sues for peace**  
Former Governor Ibori said that what is needed now is discussion over the activities and funding of the ministry and how best to make it meet the aspirations of the people. He therefore called on all persons of goodwill to join in this peace effort and stop hostilities, to enable the development process the Federal Government has put in place now to succeed.

"War is like a malignant cancer, it usually spreads uncontrollably to other areas. Therefore both

sides must listen to the voice of reason and stop the conflagration now," he said.

Chief Ibori calls on the angry youths of the Niger Delta to have faith in the President and his new initiative. He said, "The Niger Delta and Nigeria needs their energy re-channelled into really productive ventures. The educated ones among them should be encouraged to contribute their talents to the needed battle of speeding Nigeria and Africa on the part of swift development and global respect, and themselves towards personal fulfilment and glory. The uneducated has to face intellectual and skill acquisition to enable them compete in the national and global space."

Fortunately, the focus of the new ministry is two-pronged. While one corrects the abysmal lack of infrastructure in the area, the other faces the task of upgrading the intellectual and talent pool of the area." Chief Ibori urged the youth of the area to take advantage of this by joining the hostilities, emerge from their hiding places, and exploit the opportunities that everywhere that while they were fighting in the bush, life has passed them by, and that they lack the skills needed in an ever-modernising economy. This is true of freedom fighters in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, South Africa, etc."

To the militants Ibori sends a message: "You have made your point. The whole world now knows that your grievances are genuine, and for the first time, the Federal Government is truly addressing them. In every journey, there is always a place to stop. Your predecessor in arms, the late Major Isaac Adaka Boro realised this, came out from the bush, and reintegrated himself into the society — after leading the first Niger Delta uprising in the 1960s. You too must do like-wise."

At the same time he reminds the JTF troops that what they have been tasked to stop is an internal disagreement and so they have to be mindful of the amount of force to employ in restoring order in the blighted Niger Delta. "The militants are Nigerians and have never repudiated their nationality; their fight is for a just order for them and their children in a true federation. In fact, your good conduct could even help win them over," he said.

Chief Ibori commends all persons of goodwill who have joined in this wholesome peace effort and says that, "The oil war must stop so that a calculated, swift and massive development of the area should begin. But there is a prerequisite for this development. Peace, justice and understanding that would help knit Nigeria's various ethnic groups into one strong and united country," he added.

**MEND shuns N'Delta elders**  
Meanwhile, out of a deluge of nominations for the Minister of Niger Delta, President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua is believed to have picked Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the BGL Limited, Mr. Albert Okunuga for the plum job.

Okunuga, from Delta State and former Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) 2007 gubernatorial aspirant and a young entrepreneur, is believed to have been nominated by Vice President Goodluck Jonathan. It is said that Okunuga would get the support of Ijaw leader, Chief Edwin Clark.

Some Ijaw youths under the umbrella of the Ijaw Youth Leadership Forum (IYLF) were also understood to be pushing forward the secretary of the Federal Government Committee on Conflict Resolution in the Niger-Delta, Hon. Kingsley Kuku as the Minister of State in the Ministry.

Spokesman of the MEND, Jomo Gbomo, in an exclusive reply via electronic mail to an inquiry by *Saturday Vanguard* on the peace moves by Chief Clark said, "We will not listen to him (Clark) this time with all disrespect. A hurricane must run its full circle before down grading to a tropical storm."

But Cynthia Whyte, spokesperson to MEND, explaining why the group decried the 'oil war' told *Saturday Vanguard* that the Joint Task Force (JTF) attacked an Ijaw community last Saturday, and "must be made to pay for their inhumanity."

The spokesperson accused the JTF of falsifying its media responses by the conflict in order to save their jobs, saying that MEND-like decided to show pictures of dead soldiers and attacked facilities.

"You must have noticed that the JTF has begun a rapid media response (plan aimed at undermining every action that we take. Top military brass knows that they may lose their jobs if they do not begin strong media offensives. Notice how quickly they respond with stereotyped responses such as 'It's a lie', 'they didn't kill our soldiers, we killed them', etc."

"Recently, we are informed that the military have begun to flout media houses who refuse to tilt the glory to the side of the armed forces of the Nigerian state. To this end, we have decided to start taking photographs of dead soldiers and attacked facilities. The best way to quell an argument is to show evidence."

Whyte did not say when the conflict will end.

But Clark, who was in Abuja, last Wednesday to meet with the Chief of Defence Staff and Service Chiefs and possibly with President Umaru Yar'Adua for them to order their men to suspend further hostility with the militants, was jolted by the militant's rejection of his moves.

MEND, through its spokesman, Jomo Gbomo, in an e-mail to *Saturday Vanguard*, on peace moves by Chief Clark said, "We will not listen to him (Clark) this time with all due respect. A hurricane must run its full circle before down grading to a tropical storm."

Saying it was unbelievable that the militants were speaking in different voices, Clark explained that he spoke with some of the militants' leaders and got assurances that they would cease fire before he proceeded to Abuja, to hold a meeting with the Chief of Defence Staff and others.

Clark told last *Saturday Vanguard*, Thursday, said, "I'm here in Abuja in respect of the discussions I had with the boys on the way forward and I expect that they should listen to the elders of the region. If they don't listen to their elders, who will they listen to?"

"It means they have rejected our representation, because we would not be here, representing those that do not listen to the advice of their elders," Clark said.

MEND last June 22 declared a unilateral cease-fire, effective Tuesday, June 24, as a result of the plea by the elders to allow them to dialogue with the Federal

Government. MEND had also warned that any attack on its location during the period by the military would tantamount to war. But it called it off, two weeks after, accusing British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown of promising at the G8 Summit to support the Nigerian government in ending violence in the Niger-Delta. However, it did not declare any war.

Meanwhile, President Yar'Adua is said to have received a large number of nominations for the position as Minister of the new Niger Delta ministry. And he is said to be consulting to ensure that he gets the right person for the job.

But the Vice President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, according to our dependable source, "is actually the person that is supposed to recommend the Minister of Niger-Delta and he had already done so."

"The Presidency is not unaware that announcing an unpopular person as the Minister of Niger-Delta could spell another round of trouble in the capricious region, and that is why it has to be careful," the source added.

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