



Faculty of Social Sciences,
University of Port Harcourt.

POLICY BRIEF

Post-Amnesty Conflict Management Framework in the Niger Delta



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1

Introduction

3

Methods

4

Findings

5

Conclusion

6

Policy Recommendations

7

Acknowledgments

1. Introduction

The general aim of the research project, The Post Amnesty Conflict Management Framework in the Niger Delta, was to ascertain how the implementation of the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) which had been introduced by the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua-led administration in 2009 was perceived by the people of the Niger Delta and to what extent it had contributed to creating lasting conditions for peace and stability in the region. Its specific objectives were to:

- Document the nature, type and number of ex-militants trained or empowered to start their own business, those already employed and those seeking employment.
- Identify popular perceptions of the development /empowerment needs of ex-militants as well as the communities, and determine to what extent the programme was directed to satisfying them.

- Explore the means, in working with the public and private sectors, civil society groups, including faith-based and community groups and state security forces, to sustain peace in Post Amnesty Niger Delta.
- Recommend policy options to promote effective monitoring of project beneficiaries, in order to evolve and ultimately strengthen accountability, participation and transparency, and to entrench a process of confidence-building by the citizenry in government.

The background to the PAP was the armed confrontation against the state and the oil companies which youths in the Niger Delta had embarked upon to force attention to the persisting underdevelopment of the region from which the bulk (about 70%) of Government's revenue was derived. Various policy measures by the state, including the creation of the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) and its successor Niger Delta Development Commission

(NDDC) had not addressed the demand for transformational development in the region. Over the decades going back to the 1950s, the reaction of the people of the Delta to the conditions of underdevelopment varied from resignation, peaceful demands for economic and political justice, to demands for “resource control” and “true federalism”. This latest stance was given voice by the Niger Delta youths who met in and issued the Kiama Declaration of 2008 in which they demanded that the oil companies leave the region and that the Federal Government embarks on developing the region. To press their demands, various youth groups embarked on the militant challenge to the state.

The militant struggle (which featured constant kidnapping of mainly employees of the large oil companies like the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited [SPDC], Mobil, Chevron, TotalfinaElf and Texaco and destruction of crude bearing

pipelines) changed the narrative of the demand by the people of the Niger Delta region for a more equitable deployment of the resources derived from their region. More critically, it led to sharp and sustained decline in oil production and, therefore, in state revenues. The obvious and prolonged threat to state revenues seemed to have concentrated official minds and in 2009 the Alhaji Musa Shehu Yar'Adua-led Federal Government made a desperate bid for peace by granting amnesty to any persons who had engaged in the armed struggle.

The introduction of the PAP resulted in the cessation of the militant struggle. But at the same time it begged several questions about what would happen after the Federal Government stops funding the PAP by the 2015 end date. In the most unlikely (going by past trends in policy implementation in the country) event of the full implementation of the PAP, would it have been enough to consolidate the

fragile peace it ushered in? To answer this question meant interrogating the implementation of the PAP, what it had achieved, as well as how the population in the region perceived it and assessed its impact. Had the PAP answered the basic questions that were agitating the minds of the people in the oil bearing communities? Were the people in the region convinced that the PAP offered them the possibility of lasting peace and development? These were some of the fundamental questions for which the research work, the Post-Amnesty Conflict Management Framework in the Niger Delta, sought answers.

The study by the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Port Harcourt, was undertaken with a grant from the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP) of the British Council.

2. Methods

The research covered six (Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, Ondo and Rivers) States. The choice of these

States took into account their oil and gas production levels as well as the degree to which they experienced armed conflict and other criminal activities such as kidnapping and hostage taking.

The survey research methods were adopted for the study. Eight hundred and ten (810) respondents were sampled to respond to a questionnaire. In order to gather more qualitative information, focus group discussions (FGD) were organized in all 18 senatorial districts in the six States. The research questions presupposed that respondents had adequate knowledge of the problem being investigated. The objectives of the study defined clearly what was to be achieved and the design made provision for protection against gender and other biases.

Several training and preparatory workshops were held to ensure researchers understood what was required.

3. Findings

The major findings of the study are as follows:

- Respondents to the questionnaire as well as data from the FGDs suggest that most people in the Niger Delta (for example, 50% in Delta; 72% in Bayelsa; 56% in Akwa Ibom; 59% in Rivers) were not satisfied with the implementation of the PAP because it had not in any serious way addressed the fundamental problems that triggered - and could easily again trigger – the violence and militancy. Data from secondary sources supported this view.
- It was obvious from the survey that the PAP had not in any identifiable way contributed to alleviating poverty or in generally improving the conditions in the communities. There was hardly any evidence of employment creation besides the 11, 000 ex-militants who were trained in various skills many of whom could not even find any job. In Rivers State, for instance, only 264 had found employment according to

the Amnesty Implementation office. In Ondo and Akwa Ibom States, 59% and 62% of respondents, respectively, were not aware that any ex-militants had found jobs.

- The PAP had paid scant attention to infrastructural development and social services availability in communities across the Niger Delta. While it seemed to have derived from the Report of the Technical Committee on the Niger Delta, it was silent on that Committee's recommendations regarding major infrastructural development and environmental cleanup.

- Further, it had not recognised the physical damage to communities where fighting took place, or the psychological trauma suffered by community members whose loved ones were killed by known militants from the same community. So, the PAP did not provide for the reconstruction of communities and for the reintegration of the ex-militants into their communities. Participants in the focus group discussions told repeated stories of family separation, the loss of

children, parents, homes, and entire neighbourhoods, reprisals against family members, torture, rape and disappearances. These remained painful memories that were not recognized in the reintegration process of the PAP.

- The PAP formulation and implementation processes did not involve the critical stakeholders (CBOs, traditional leaders, local governments) in the communities and it did not take advantage of experiences from other West African countries (Liberia and Sierra Leone, for example) where similar programmes had been implemented.

- Even though the programme seemed to focus especially on the people who carried arms, it was not thorough and systematic in doing so. Awarding huge contracts to the leaders of the militant groups created its own unique problem. Not only did it not stop illegal oil bunkering and so-called artisanal refining, it separated these leaders from those they led. At the same time that it had the potential for some

kind of inter-group rivalry between these leaders. The rank and file of the ex-militants were pleased with their N65, 000.00 monthly salaries. Unfortunately, this sent out a powerful signal suggesting that it was profitable to have been violent, especially since the recipients were not expected to do anything in return.

- The poor attention paid to reintegration of ex-militants into motivated hostage-taking and violent reprisals.

4. Conclusion

The goal which the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) aimed at achieving was clear: to stabilize the region and to restore full-scale oil production. It quickly achieved these, thus suggesting that result-oriented dialogue was more effective than armed confrontation. However, this was a limited goal and the fact that the root causes of the militancy were not being addressed left open the possibility that another batch of frustrated and angry youths could, justifiably using the lingering

fundamental issues as their reason, take up arms and hope to at least be “settled” by the state. In the course of the struggle oil production and export had declined as a result of attacks on oil facilities and production personnel. With these, state revenues also declined. At the same time it seemed the militants also turned against the communities through the criminality that became inseparable from the struggle. For this the armed struggle turned communities into victims of both the underdevelopment of the region and as well as the struggle to redress the situation. The extent of environmental and human destruction set back the prospects for the development of these areas that so urgently and desperately need to be developed.

The PAP did not remove any of the triggers for violence which still remain live in the Niger Delta and need to be managed. Perhaps more could have been realized if the communities and their local leaders/institutions were integrated

as critical stakeholders into the process of formulating and implementing the PAP. In the event, important resources for managing the conflict were neglected.

5. Policy Recommendations

The following policy recommendations derive directly from the findings of the research:

- a). Government at all levels should urgently and single-mindedly address the issues of electricity, portable water, healthcare, as well as water and road transportation networks, among others, in the Niger Delta. Some communities that were direct victims of the militancy and the state's initial military response should be rebuilt so that their inhabitants are denied any reason to continue feeling bitter against the state and the oil companies.
- b). Concerted efforts should be made by Government to rejuvenate local economies, as a means of increasing opportunities for economic recovery and income

generation in the Niger Delta. This could be done through development of large-scale agricultural (e. g. oil palm and rice) and fishing projects into which the youths could be deployed.

c). It is important to devise and deploy detailed reintegration schemes that do not focus only on ex-militants but also incorporate the wider communities. In particular, attention should be paid to the needs of the women ex-militants as well as to the psychological needs of mothers whose sons and daughters are now alienated from the communities because they had become militants.

d). In order to deny opportunities to those who depend on illegal oil bunkering for resources to bring arms into the region, the Federal government should, as a matter of highest priority, enlist the support of the international community to put in place a system for tracking oil stolen from Nigeria through its origin. This will help to address the issue of illegal oil bunkering and crude theft.

e). Government and relevant stakeholders need to pay attention to the vulnerabilities, the potential as well as the rights of youths, by assisting them to live productive lives, to counter the effect of paying out money to people who are not productively engaged.

6. Acknowledgement

The study on Post-Amnesty Conflict Management Framework in the Niger Delta, from which this brief was prepared, was carried out by the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Port Harcourt with a grant from the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP) of the British Council. The NSRP grant also covered the cost of publication of the research study and the preparation of this brief. The immediate past and present Deans, Prof. Henry Alapiki and Prof. Okey Onuchuku, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Port Harcourt, played coordinating roles in facilitating the research. The immense contributions of the research team leaders (Dr. Sofiri Joab-Peterside; Dr.

Robert Dode; Dr. K. K. Aaron; Dr. Sam O. Ogege; Prof. Augustine Ikelegbe; and Paul Nyulaku) and field staff as well as those of the administrative staff of the Faculty, are generously acknowledged. The final research report was edited for publication by Henry Alapiki, Eme Ekekwe and Sofiri Joab-Peterside.

This policy brief was prepared by Prof. Eme Ekekwe.

It should be stressed here that while the grant for the research was made by NSRP, the findings and the views in the research report are entirely those of the researchers who, as scholars, have only shown the trends they found in interrogating the facts.

References

ources, the use of the questionnaire, interview and focus group discussions. In addition to numerous print media sources, the following is a selection of the secondary sources that were also used:

Agbegbedia, Oghenevwoke Anthony (2014). Gender Mainstreaming and

the Impacts of the Federal Government's Amnesty Programme in the Niger Delta Region. *International Journal of Gender and Women Studies*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 177 – 195

Ikelegbe, A. O. (2010). Oil, Resource Conflicts and the Post-conflict Transition in the Niger Delta region: Beyond the Amnesty. Benin City: Centre for Population and Environmental Development, Monograph series No. 3

Joab-Peterside, S. (2010). State and Fallacy of Rehabilitation of 'Repentant Militants' in Nigeria's Niger Delta: An analysis of the First Phase of the Federal Government's Amnesty Programme. Pp. 69 – 110, *Pan African Social Science Review (PASSR)*, September, Department of Sociology, University of Port Harcourt

Joab-Peterside, S. (2011). Rivers State in Perceptions and Reality: Documenting the Amnesty process in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria.

Port Harcourt: Centre for Advanced Social Science (CASS)

Nwanjiokwu-Dahou, K. (2012). The political economy of oil and rebellion in Nigeria's Delta Region. *Review of African Political Economy* 39 (132): 295 – 315

Obi, C. (2014), Oil and post-amnesty programme (PAP): What prospects for sustainable development and peace in the Niger Delta? *Review of African Political Economy* 41 (140): 249 – 263

Ogege, S. O. (2011). Amnesty Initiative and the dilemma of sustainable development in the Niger Delta. *Journal of Sustainable Development* 4 (4), 249 – 258

Ukiwo, U. (2007). From 'pirates to 'militants': A historical Perspective on anti-state and anti-oil company mobilisation among the Ijaw of Warri, Western Niger Delta. *African Affairs* 106 (425): 587 – 610.

This brief is based on study conducted by the faculty of Social Sciences, University of Port Harcourt, Choba. The research was supported by the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP).

NSRP is managed by the British Council, International Alert and Social Development Direct (SDD) and funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID)

Views expressed are those of the authors.

This research work was made possible by the following:



nsrp
.....
NIGERIA STABILITY
AND RECONCILIATION
PROGRAMME

