

Amnesty for Militants and Sustainable Peace in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

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Abstract. The objective of this study is to ascertain the extent to which the amnesty programme for the militants in the Niger Delta has stemmed the tide of restiveness in the region. The study relied on secondary data sourced from textbooks, journals and newspapers and employed relative deprivation theory as a framework of analysis. The findings showed that the amnesty programme for the militants was a child of necessity adopted by the Nigerian government to check the incessant acrimony in the Niger Delta region to stabilise oil production. On the one hand, the disarmament and demobilisation components of the programme to a large extent, reduced hostilities in the region. This trend led to an increase in oil production. On the other hand, contradictions inherent in the implementation of the programme particularly the reintegration of the ex-militants, suspension of the sponsorship of their education, the deployment of force by the government and failure of the policy to address issues of infrastructural development, environmental degradation, youth employment among others spurred fresh hostilities in the region. The study concluded that for the programme to be successful, reintegration efforts must be comprehensive, constant dialogue with all stakeholders as well as meaningful infrastructural development in the region should be central in the agenda of the government.

Keywords: Amnesty, Disarmament, Demobilisation, Militancy, Niger Delta, Peace-building, Reintegration

1. Introduction

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is one of the important wetlands and marine ecosystem in the world. The region is made of up nine of the thirty-six states of the Nigerian federation and having a population of about 31,224,587 million people (NPC, 2006) and heavily endowed with large oil deposits. It has been estimated that oil extracted from the Niger Delta region accounts for over 70% of revenue

accruing to the federation account (Ikelegbe & Umukoro, 2016). Paradoxically, even though the Niger Delta region is the economic hub of the Nigerian State, attaining peace in the region particularly since the commencement of the Fourth Republic in 1999 had been a thorny issue which has continued to attract national and global attention.

The Niger Delta region had become a great concern because of pervasive civil disturbances, violence and economic sabotage. The hostilities and violence unleashed in the region have continued to spawn a series of contradictions such as threats to lives and property, lawlessness and criminal activities for the Nigerian State (Ikelegbe, 2010). The crisis has equally led to the wanton destruction of oil installations, which has been undermining the production, storage and transportation of oil (Tamuno 2011).

Several attempts have been made by successive Nigerian governments to bring peace to the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, but such attempts did not assuage the hostilities in the region. However, in the year 2008, the Yar'Adua led administration came up with the idea of granting amnesty to the militants as a mechanism to restore peace to the Niger Delta. The amnesty programme was targeted at achieving three primary objectives, namely: Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) of ex-militants into the society. Since 2009 when the policy came into being, its impact on the Niger Delta region is viewed with mixed feelings. To some people, with the implementation of the amnesty policy, the federal government has been able to restore peace into the region (Omokhoa & Ikelegbe, 2016). To others, the amnesty policy has not achieved the desired results given the resurgence of increased militancy as evidenced in the emergence of the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) and other groups whose activities have truncated oil production in the region under the President Muhammadu Buhari led administration (Okechukwu & Inyikalum, 2016). Succinctly put, the resurgence of hostilities and the emergence of new

militant groups showed that the amnesty had not addressed the fundamental causes of militancy in the Niger Delta region (Ebiede, 2017). It is against the backdrop that this study appraises the amnesty programme in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria with the view to analysing the components of the amnesty programme and ascertaining reasons for the resurgence of militancy and emergence of new militant groups.

2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

- identify the causes of militancy in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria,
- discuss the components of the amnesty programme for the militants in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria,
- ascertain the extent to which the amnesty has served as a peacebuilding mechanism in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria,
- explain the resurgence of hostilities in the Niger Delta region despite the implementation of the amnesty programme, and
- highlight measures capable of promoting peace in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

3. Methods and Materials of study

This study relied primarily on secondary data which are sourced from textbooks, journals and newspapers publications on militancy as well as the amnesty programme for the militants in the Niger Delta region. The argument canvassed in this study is that the little attention paid to the development of the Niger Delta region as well as the use of brutal force to suppress agitations by the people of the region transformed the non-violent protests to militancy. Apart from these preliminary remarks that comprise the introduction, objectives of the study, as well as the methods of study, the remaining part of the study is divided into six sections. Section one focuses on conceptual and theoretical issues. Section two delves into the framework of analysis. Section three delves into militancy in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, while the fourth section discusses amnesty as a peacebuilding mechanism in the Niger Delta. The fifth section focuses on the roadblocks to sustainable peace in the Niger Delta region, while section six concludes the study.

4. Conceptual and Theoretical Issues

The concept of amnesty has been variously defined in different ways by different writers. Amoda (2009)

avers that amnesty approach to security, politics and conflict is a legal approach which refers to a general pardon of offence by the government and a deliberate overlooking of offences against a government. Viewed in this sense, when amnesty is granted, the criminally culpable person or persons are released from just punishment of the law. It also means, to cancel or not to exert punishment due to an offence. The views expressed by Ikelegbe (2010) are in consonant with that of Amoda. He asserts among other things that “amnesty is a guarantee of exemption from prosecution and pardons from punishment for certain criminal, rebel and insurgent actions hitherto committed usually against the state”(p.6). He asserts further that amnesty: *indemnifies affected persons in terms of safety and protection from punitive actions, retributions and associated losses and that it is usually within a specific time within which offenders admit the crime and take advantage of the general pardon. There are, however, certain commitments or remediative actions such as hand over of illegal arms and confession of illegal actions* (p.7).

Ogege (2011) asserts that amnesty refers to a strategic state policy which takes a form of executive or legislative clemency in which offenders or those involved in illegal actions are formally pardoned. He asserts further that, once a person or group is granted amnesty, all records of the person's accusation, trial, conviction and imprisonment must be cast into oblivion or people must lose the memory of whatever atrocities the person had committed. Ogege (2011) argues further that an amnesty process in most cases is conditional. It requires the recipients to perform specific tasks such as providing information, admitting the truth about their actions and showing remorse. Amnesty is designed to achieve a series of objectives. Andreas (as cited in Ogege, 2011) advances the view that the philosophy behind the design of amnesty is to achieve the followings: To alleviate internal pressure, protect state agents from prosecution, promote peace and reconciliation, respond to international pressure, provide reparations, encourage exiles to return and to adhere to religious or cultural traditions. Regarding the Nigerian situation, the amnesty for the militants in Niger Delta was designed to restore peace.

In terms of the causes of militancy in the Niger Delta region, two lines of arguments are discernible in the literature. The first argument posits that militancy manifesting in hostage-taking, kidnapping, pipeline vandalisation and hijacking among others resulted mainly from frustration spawned by pervasive poverty, increasing unemployment and idleness of youths in the region. The argument is that despite the

centrality of the region to the Nigerian economy, in the opinion of the people of the Niger Delta, the region has both been marginalised and deprived of access to the proceeds from the oil resources exploited from their soil and that all entreaties to receive attention from the government had failed to yield positive results (Tamuno, 2011). The argument is that the people resorted to militancy to prevent further alienation, exploitation and environmental degradation in the region. To this school of thought, the observed inadequate attention on the part of the government towards the development of the Niger Delta communities gave rise to community agitations mainly championed by the youths which started with the testimonies before Sir Willink Commission of Inquiry set up by the colonial authorities few years before independence.

This narrative of militancy in the Niger Delta shows that when independence was granted to Nigeria in 1960, the emergence of Nigerians in leadership positions did not address the grievances of the oil-rich region of the Nigerian State. Consequently, in the early days of independence, Isaac Adaka Boro who was an undergraduate student at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka led an armed protest against the Nigerian state over the exploitation of oil and gas resources in the Niger Delta area. He was the leader of Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF), an armed militia with members consisting mainly of his fellow Ijaw ethnic extraction. Isaac Adaka Boro with his 40 member's armed group blew up oil pipelines, attacked police stations and declared the independence of Niger Delta Republic on February 23, 1966. This act was suppressed by the federal government of Nigeria, sanctioning Boro and his men to a death sentence. Ebienna and Nwaodike (as cited in Ugwu, 2010) summarized the situation as a paradox of suffering amidst plenty and the realization of that stirred people in the Niger Delta to make demands on the Nigerian State and multinational oil companies to improve their living conditions.

The second explanation for militancy in the Niger Delta is that the people of the region did not resort to agitations mainly because of the neglect by the government but due to the fact that the series of the agitations did not yield any meaningful positive response on the part of the government. Instead, the agitations were met with state violence, a trend that resulted in the aggressive approach by the youths in the region. Simply put, the use of force by the government transformed the agitations to militancy manifesting in errant violent movement, sea piracy and bunkering of oil installations, agitation for resources control, hostage-taking of foreigners and

local oil workers and communal clashes among others.

The direction of this narrative is that the neglect of the Niger Delta region and the attendant use of brutal force to suppress the agitation of people of the region for the development of their communities and the refusal of successive Nigerian governments to respond positively to their demands transformed the agitations of the people in the Niger-Delta to militancy (Ebienna & Nwaodike (as cited in Ugwu, 2010). The struggle that started as a peaceful agitation became militarised in response to the violent posture of the insensitive Nigerian State to the plights of the people of the Niger Delta region. Succinctly put, militancy resulted from the application of force by the Nigerian government in quelling non-violent agitation/protests for development and resource control.

5. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Relative Deprivation Theory (RDT) as espoused by writers such as Gurr (1970), Rummel (1977) and Berkowitz (1989) among others. These writers linked aggressive behaviour to deprivation and frustration. Gurr a leading exponent of the (RDT), defined relative deprivation 'as 'actor's perception of the difference between their expectations and capabilities' (p.24). The central tenet of this theory is that when people consider what they are entitled to and what they have and there is a discrepancy, they may feel frustrated, and in the long run, aggression may set in. According to Runciman (cited in Schmitt, Maes & Widaman 2009;, Grasso, Yoxon, Karampansa & Temple 2017) relative deprivation can be divided into two types. These are egoistic deprivation which is about individual deprivation and it relates to a situation where an individual compares himself or herself with other persons. The second typology is fraternal, which refers to a group deprivation, that is when a group of citizens compare themselves with other groups. The gap between what they perceived to be their entitlement and what they have is relative deprivation, and it creates frustration, aggression and violence. Dollard Dollard, Miller, Doob, Mowre and Sears, (cited in Berkowitz, 1989), explicitly established the nexus between frustration and aggression. To them, aggressive behaviour is caused by frustration, meaning that the manifestation of aggressive behaviour presupposes the existence of frustration. Simply put, frustration leads to aggression.

In this study, we advanced the position that the crisis in the Niger Delta region is attributed to deprivation

and frustration. The region is blessed with oil resources, but despite its contributions to the nation's economy, the people of the region have little to show for the presence of oil in their territory. The principle of revenue allocation, which ought to assuage the plight of the inhabitant of the region, has had a little positive impact on the people of the Niger Delta region. Series of attempts at drawing the attention of the government to address the grievances of the people of the region have not received the expected response. Thus, relative deprivation experienced by the people and the attendant frustration explains the aggressive behaviour such as militancy in the region.

6. Militancy in the Niger Delta Region

Militancy in the Niger Delta region is not a recent development that started with the return to civilian rule in 1999. Similarly, government response to the demands and agitation of the Niger Delta people is not equally a recent phenomenon. Both the agitations by the people of the region and the responses of the government started before the attainment of independence. The people of the Niger Delta started agitating against marginalisation, neglect and politics of exclusion by the majority ethnic nationalities before independence. Though the Willink Commission rejected their demands for a separate region, it nevertheless led to the setting up of the Niger-Delta Development Board (NDDB) to fast track the development of the region (Ikelegbe, 2005; Report of the Technical Committee on the Niger Delta, 2008). From all intents, it was not implemented to its logical conclusion hence the resurgence of a series of protests in the immediate years after independence. Such protests in the early years of independence included the Kaiama declaration by Isaac Adaka Boro earlier mentioned. Though the government eventually crushed the uprising, but sadly, it did not succeed in putting an end to agitations in that region.

The period of the civil war did not significantly witness many agitations; the period was, however, an era the federal government came up with legislations that transferred ownership of oil resources from the region and placing them under the control of the federal government. However, when the country returned to civilian rule in 1979, issues on oil resources took new dimensions. Governors of the major oil-producing states initiated legal actions against the federal government questioning the revenue allocation formula, which made little provision for the compensation of states where oil explorations were being carried out. Similarly, during the military era, particularly under the Abacha

administration, the agitations extended to environmental issues. Prominent leaders of such agitations included Ken Saro Wiwa and other Ogoni eight who were executed by the military. This trend transformed agitations into militancy in the Niger Delta region.

With the enthronement of civilian government in 1999, one would have expected that the use of brutal force against the activists would cease and a more refined path to peacebuilding would be taken. This did not happen as the Obasanjo led administration continued with the authoritarian streak of the military. Military personnel were deployed to the region, and hapless and helpless civilians were attacked and killed as evidenced in the invasion and occupation of communities such as Uvwuechem, Ogoni, Tombia, Kaiama, Soku, Odi, Agee, Ezetu, Gbanramatu, Oporoza, Peremabiri among others by the Nigerian military.

7. Amnesty as a Peacebuilding Mechanism in the Niger Delta Region

As noted earlier, the use of force did not deter agitations in the Niger-Delta. Instead, it transformed such agitations to militancy. This made the region to be unsafe for meaningful economic activities. Determined to put an end to the crisis in that region, late President Yar' Adua, on September 5, 2008, set up a 45 member Niger Delta Technical Committee, to review all previous reports on the Niger Delta region and come up with appropriate recommendations on the way forward for the region. The Committee which was headed by the then President of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) Mr. Ledum Mitee has the following terms of reference:

To collate, review and distil the various reports, suggestions and recommendations on the Niger Delta from the Willinks Commission Report (1958) to the present and give a summary of the recommendations necessary for government action.

To appraise the summary recommendations and present a detailed short medium and long term suggestion for the challenges in the Niger Delta.

To make and present to the government any other recommendations that will help the Federal Government achieve sustainable development, peace, human and environmental security in the Niger Delta region (Report of the Technical Committee on the Niger Delta, 2008)

The Committee made far-reaching recommendations capable of returning enduring peace to the Niger Delta region. Part of the recommendations included the appointment of a mediator to facilitate discussions between government and militants; granting of amnesty to some militant leaders; launching disarmament, demobilisation and rehabilitation campaign, and increase in the percentage of oil revenue to the Niger Delta region to 25 per cent from the 13 per cent; establishing regulations that compel oil companies to have insurance bonds; making the enforcement of critical environmental laws a national priority; exposing fraudulent environmental cleanups of oil spills and prosecuting operators, ending gas flaring by December 31, 2008, as previously ordered by the Federal Government (Report of the Technical Committee on the Niger Delta, 2008).

The government accepted some of the recommendations of the Committee, particularly that of amnesty for the militants. It, therefore, set up a Presidential Panel on Amnesty and Disarmament of Militants in the Niger Delta on May 5, 2009, to implement the recommendations concerning the granting of amnesty to the militants. In furtherance of this, President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua on June 25, 2009, announced a general amnesty for militants. President Yar'Adua stated among other things:

The pardon shall take effect upon the surrender and handing over of all equipment, weapons, arms and ammunition and execution of the renunciation of Militancy Forms specified in the schedule hereto, by the affected persons at the nearest collation centre established for government in each of the Niger Delta States (Idonor, 2009)

The amnesty which was in three phases included the disarmament and demobilisation of militants; the rehabilitation and integration of ex-militants and the final stage of massive infrastructural development. The main thrust of the amnesty programme was that the militants were to surrender their arms and be pardoned for their nefarious activities. Each repentant militant was to receive the sum of N65, 000 (about US\$420) as a monthly stipend. The Nigerian government considered the amnesty programme as a child necessity to halt insurgents who ought to have been punished for engaging in treasonable offences and criminal activities from facing the wrath of the law for peace to reign

The aim of the Federal Government in granting amnesty was to disarm, demobilise, rehabilitate and reintegrate the militants into the society, for peace to reign and to put an end to the wave of violence,

destruction and other criminal activities in the region which have stifled oil production in the region. As noted by Ushie (2013), the decision to grant amnesty to the militants is a novel approach to the resolution of the crisis in the Niger Delta that is different from previous attempts characterised by the use of state power to suppress agitations of the people of the Niger Delta. It is an equally an acknowledgement that the crisis in the Niger Delta region requires a democratic, participatory solution and not the use of force to suppress the oppressed and impoverished maritime communities.

In the first stage of the amnesty which commenced on August 6, 2009, and ended on October 4, 2009, the militants were requested to surrender their arms at designated centres to allow for appropriate documentation, rehabilitation and reintegration. At the end of the exercise, it was recorded that a total number of 26,358 militants surrendered arms in their possession. The rationale behind the disarmament was the belief that voluntary submission, mopping up and collection of arms being used by the militants would, to a considerable extent incapacitate them. Though with the mopping of arms, there was ceasefire and normalcy started returning to the region, it has been observed that the exercise was not all that successful given the disparity between the number of registered militants that participated in the amnesty programme and the number of arms and ammunition handed in by the militants. According to Agbo (as cited in Ekumaoko, 2013), a total of 1,798 rifles, 1981 guns of various types, 70 RPGs, 159 pistols, one spear and six cannons were surrendered by the repentant militants. This number was a far cry from the 26,358 militants that were beneficiaries of the amnesty programme (Ejovi & Ebie, 2013). The argument has been that if a weapon each was handed in by the militants, it should have been in the neighbourhood of the number benefiting from the programme. This suggests that not all the arms were handed in by the militants and as such a little provocation could lead to re-armament of the militants as evidenced in the resurgence of the activities of the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA).

The second component, that is, demobilisation focused on formal disbandment of the militant groups from carrying out the purpose of their formation. This was partially achieved as many of the militants renounced the membership of their groups. However, the success of this stage was marred by the issue of mismanagement of stipends granted the ex-militants, allowance unpaid or not paid regularly, huge disparities between payments made to foot soldiers and former militants commanders, limited access to

rehabilitation training and allowances for those who surrendered weapons after the deadline, inappropriate training provision, limited employment prospects, the absence of a broader political settlement involving the broader Niger Delta population that has borne the costs of conflict, and the politically motivated staffing of bodies responsible for implementing and coordinating the amnesty programme as part of the numerous flaws of the amnesty (Jombo, 2016)

The third stage that is, reintegration revolved around making the ex-combatants reacquire civilian status, gain sustainable employment and make a decent income was given priority. During the Dr Goodluck Jonathan led administration, the government embarked on skills acquisition for the ex-militants. The reintegration component of the amnesty programme was progressively implemented. Efforts were targeted at offering the ex-militants practical training and formal education within and outside the shores of Nigeria. Many of ex-militants were allowed to study one course or the other in foreign countries (Ebiri, 2018). The federal government was not only responsible for the tuition of these militants but also gave them upkeep allowance. During this period, a lid was placed on militant activities, a modicum of peace and peaceful cohabitation was achieved

8. Roadblocks to Sustainable Peace in the Niger-Delta

The preliminary analysis of the implementation of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration components of the amnesty programme which was designed to bring back peace and security to the Niger Delta region shows that it initially yielded the expected results. Before the declaration of the amnesty, it was estimated that Nigeria was losing over one million barrels of crude oil per day estimated to be in the range of (N8.7billion) (\$58m) as of May 2009. Similarly, the crisis was seen to have claimed over 1000 lives in 2008 alone (OSAPND, 2018).

During the regime of Dr Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015), the region witnessed safer waterways, reduction in kidnapping cases and destruction of oil installations, and reduction in the hostilities against the multinational oil companies and the fact the local population was supporting the government in apprehending criminals and trouble makers. The ceasefire at the wake of the implementation of the amnesty programme led to an increase in the country's oil output which rose to 2.3million oil barrels per day from the meagre production of 800,000 barrels of oil per day between 2006 and

2008 (Ejovi & Ebie, 2013; Nwobueze & Inokoba, 2017). However, this could not be sustained due to the following reasons.

First, the emphasis on demobilisation of the militants was a hoax. The belief that mopping up arms would incapacitate the militants in embarking on offensive attacks on military formations and oil installations proved otherwise. Apart from the fact that the total arms surrendered were far below the number of repentant militants, demobilisation had little answer to the plight of the people of the Niger Delta region. Efforts were not directed at factors that led to increased militancy. Instead, attention was on the instruments used by the militants. Ibaba (2011) aptly captured this when posited the question that:

Does the surrender of arms and renunciation of violence by militants bring the frustration of the entire population to an end? Are the militants the only deprived in Niger Delta? Are the amnesty programme and the attention given to the ex-militants not reinforcing the frustration of those who did not take up arms against the Nigerian state? My answer to the first two is No, but the answer to the third question is in the affirmative. This brings us to the point that violence could rear up or recur in the region if the frustration which supports insurgency is not resolved. Resolving these frustrations is, therefore, a requirement for peacebuilding in the region (Ibaba, 2011:264).

In a similar vein, it has been noted that the amnesty was exclusive because it targeted only militants without consideration for the victims of militancy and hostage-taking in the region (Akinwale, 2010; Ebiede, 2017). Similarly, Dahou (as cited in Oluduro & Oluduro, 2012) equally posits that families (mothers and children) who lost fathers and sons and homes and have been displaced by the conflict were not included in the amnesty package. Moreover, the state's monetisation of community grievances has been viewed as unsustainable, because it implies that the state was merely paying militants to be peaceful based on oil revenues which are finite and volatile (Ushie, 2013)

Secondly, apart from the issue of the target group, it was alleged that about 80 per cent of the budget was expended on payments of consultants and contractors leaving a paltry 20 per cent for the rehabilitation of the ex-militants. There was also allegation on the over bloating of the numbers of registered ex-militants and that some of the training centres did not meet acceptable standards and were operating with inadequate facilities, among others (Ezeamalu, 2019).

Thirdly, it has been observed that the amnesty policy was not comprehensively enough hence not capable of addressing the problems that spawned agitations and militancy in the Niger-Delta. We have referred to poverty, the inadequacy of infrastructure, environmental degradation, pollution, dislocation associated with the oil prospecting, among others as part of the reasons for militancy in the region. These have not been captured by the amnesty thus corroborating the view that the amnesty was designed to palliate the people of the Nigeria Delta to permit the various oil companies in the region go about their regular business and in the process stabilise the revenue accruing to the government from that sector and region (Ebiri, 2018).

Fourth, the payment of stipends to the ex-militants could not be sustained. This led to the resurgence of militancy. During the early days of the first tenure of the Buhari led administration (2015-2019), specific measures put in place for the reintegration of the ex-militants under the amnesty programme, especially in the area of education suffered a severe setback when the dues - tuition and upkeep allowances of the ex-militants were not made available (Akasike, 2019). This led to a series of protests both within and outside Nigeria. Some of the ex-militants undergoing university education, especially in the United Kingdom and Malaysia were sent packing from their respective schools. The circumstances further aggravated the fragile peace in the Niger Delta region.

Fifth, in recent years the government resorted to the use of force to suppress agitations in the Niger Delta region. For instance, President Muhammadu Buhari was quoted to have said the federal government would not fail to use force should the militants refuse to embrace dialogue as offered by the government (Ikeke, nd). This was followed by the massive deployment of military personnel to the region. The activities of the military coded 'Operation Crocodile Smile' which aimed at protecting military and oil installations did not deter militancy but sparked off fresh hostilities in the region.

9. Conclusion

Despite the above-observed shortcomings of the amnesty programme in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, the programme according to many pundits has, to a considerable extent restored peace in the Niger-Delta which has led to an increase in oil production (Ejovi & Ebie, 2013; Nwobueze & Inokoba, 2017; OSAPND, 2018). However, the resurgence of violence and destruction of oil

installations suggests that all is not well with the amnesty programme as already discussed. The issues of revenue allocation, environmental pollution, particularly the cleanup of Ogoni land, infrastructural development, youth employment, among others, have not received adequate attention (Ebiri, 2018).

There is no doubt about the fact that the need to have sustainable peace in the Niger Delta region has been the desire of successive Nigeria government due to the importance of the region to the nation's economy. The failure of the various intervention programmes to bring about socio-economic development from Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB), Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), and Ministry of Niger Delta to mention but few have been attributed to lack of political will. The amnesty programme may go in the way of other intervention programmes if the federal government fails to do the needful in keeping the programme afloat to sustain peace and peaceful cohabitation in the Niger Delta region. The following are therefore recommended for sustainable peace in the region.

- Reintegration of ex-militants under the DDR arrangement is a long term investment, and concerted effort must be made to see it through. It is rather disturbing that ex-militants under the amnesty programme that are undergoing university education and practical training both within and outside Nigeria, who are yet to complete their training are left in limbo, to either fetch for themselves or abandon such training. This will be not only a wasted investment on the part of the federal government that had sponsored the training/education for one or two years but also the bitterness that will generate from the victims who are unable to complete their education may relapse into hostility in no distant future.
- To avoid trashing the achievement of the amnesty programme, the government must put in place adequate and effective funding process into the post amnesty programmes. Similarly, social and economic infrastructure must be put in place in the Niger Delta region to stem the wave of agitations.
- The deployment of force from all indications has proven to be an ineffective measure aimed at suppressing agitation and militancy in the Niger-Delta region. All stakeholders must embrace dialogue as the pathway to

addressing the grievances of the people of the region.

- Marginalisation and deprivation must be critically looked into. A comprehensive development plan for the region must be put in place. The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) must be well funded and monitored to ensure that funds released are judiciously utilised for the right purpose.
- Policies and programmes that have the capacity of addressing unemployment among Nigeria youths, in general, must be put in place and implemented vigorously. This, by extension, will reduce the activities of unemployed youths in the Niger Delta region that are restoring to militancy as a means for survival.

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