DOCUMENTING THE AMNESTY PROCESS IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION OF NIGERIA: DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY BUY-IN.

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Introduction

- The British and Portuguese Imperialism
- Partitioning of West Africa
- Amalgamation of the Protectorates in Nigeria
- The Struggles for Resource Control and Self-Determination by Southern (Nigeria) Minorities
- Various Declarations:
  - Oro Declaration
  - Bori Declaration
  - Kiama Declaration
  - Ibibio Union Declaration
  - Others
- The Niger Delta Peoples’ Compact of Benin City
The Amnesty and Ledum Mitee’s Technical Committee Report

- Encapsulated an interlocking of recommended development processes within the Niger Delta, which married the people and communities through propositions for establishment of:
  - National Minorities Commission
  - A Multi-Stakeholder Niger Delta Policy and Project Compliance Monitoring Committee
  - Niger Delta Special Infrastructural Intervention Fund
  - Niger Delta Futures Trust Fund
  - Oil Producing Communities Trust Fund
- TCND Report also recommended (with timelines) a short term, medium term and long term pragmatic approaches for the development of the region, which amnesty was just an aspect of.
Documenting the Amnesty Process in the Niger Delta Region by CASS and OSIWA

- **Contextual Structure**: Quite straight with historical evaporation of the Niger Delta Question and realism of today’s Nigeria; Petroleum Economy and dislocations from the complexities of Niger Delta persistent communal upheavals.

- **Methodological Reality**: Appreciably useful within the corridors of intellectual think tank, though with a disequilibrium of scoping sampling with the catchment and non-catchment areas of the region.

- **Community-centered recommendations from the documentation of the amnesty process**: That is the core element which perhaps originates the need for this presentation.

- **Factual dynamics**: Though there are lots of inter-alignment among recommendations of each Author’s Chapter for Community Buy-in, those specifically extracted and very interesting, as it may form ingredients of challenges and my recommendations are:
An independent process for monitoring and evaluating the rehabilitation and training programmes for the ex-militants should be in place. One of the gaps identified was a disconnect between the amnesty programme and other development policies targeting the Niger Delta. The Post-amnesty programme should therefore be executed in tandem with other initiatives for the human and infrastructural development in the Niger Delta. ... Government on its part at all levels should publish the financial statements related to the amnesty programme. The amnesty should not be implemented as a purely security response. The way it is currently being implemented contradicts the goal of addressing the grievances of the Niger Delta people. The JTF should be proscribed... –Others
Bayelsa State

- There is need for the reform of the security system in the country to ensure respect for human rights... In more cases than one, helpless communities have been punished for the singular sin of one renegade individual or group. The examples of Odi, Odioma and most recently Ayakoromor leaves bad example...
- Security agencies should be proactive by working to prevent violent and criminal conducts through building the capacity of its staff in intelligence gathering and investigation.
- ...Commitment of the State to the Directive Principles of State Policy.
- ...Implore the representative of the Niger Delta in government at all levels to step up efforts to actualize the implementation of the Report of the TCND.
- Others
Delta State

- Community based approaches to the DDR for such Communities like: Ogbe-Ijoh, Ogidigben, Gbaramatu, Ugborodo, Escravos, as well as the stretch of communities lying in the Benin river, amongst others.
- ...Long term DDR within the region.
- New Town Development projects...
- ... Reinvigoration of Security agencies ...
- Criminalization of bunkering, amongst others.
Edo State

- Environmental rehabilitation
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Participatory decision-making
- Land Ownership Reforms
- Elimination of corruption in the amnesty programme
- Make ex-militants stakeholders in oil sector(?)
- Others
Ondo State

- Consensus Building
- Arms Accountability
- Reconciliation
- SMEs
- Local Economic Recovery
- Community Driven Initiatives, e.g:  
  - *WB Community Social Development Programme, EU MPP 9, UNDP YEP etc*
Rivers State

- Large numbers of children (6–17 years) associated with the groups either as errand boys/girls or those born by ex-militant (both male and female) were excluded, as the process was not child-friendly, hence the need to identify such children and reintegrate them into the project.
- ...With the right engagement and training on HIV issues, ex-militants do have the potentials to become ‘change agents’ assisting their communities to prevent infections.
- Involving of impacted communities in the reintegration process is fundamental to success of the post amnesty project. Though some of the ex-militants maybe seen as legitimate or heroic freedom fighters, many are also despised because of the atrocities they committed against the people they claimed to defend...
Rivers State cont...

- Government should ensure community participation in the DDR (with emphasis on (R) process, particularly in areas impacted by militant activities (such as camps and communities destroyed by military inversions and where rehabilitation centers are to be established.
- There should be urgent need for the amnesty implementation team to mainstream gender into the design and implementation of the new DDR (R programme.
- Government should establish a re-integration fund, allocate land for agricultural activities to those trained in agricultural sector and provide employment to ex-militants and social security for those unable to work due to injury.
- Most of the ex-militants desire employment in the security forces, thus efforts should be made to recruit those able to meet the standards for employment in the security forces.
Odioma (Bayelsa) Rehab Centre Site Clearing
Guiding the upcoming generation on the wobbling foundation of the Nigerian State
Investing in history
Documenting the struggles for freedom by Nigeria’s minorities
Guiding international Political Players on the complexity of the Niger Delta’s Petro-economy
Measuring the trend of resource conflicts to growing instability of countries in Africa
Setting a historical factual footprint on the character and emerging complications to the Niger Delta Question.
Can the Communities Buy-in(?)

- At what cost?
- What about Political Sovereignty and Economic Freedom?
- Environmental Sustainability?
- Infrastructural Development?
- Cultural Corruption?
- Social Dislocation?
- International (Economic) Conspiracy?
- Emerging Trillions from derivation with squandamania, corruption and political rascality from local politicians?
- Subdued citizenry due to endemic poverty, insecurity, lack of participatory governance space and proliferations in heavy and light weapons which has made human lives cheap in Nigeria?
- Where and what is the result of the proclaimed and celebrated amnesty to the local people in the Niger Delta, outside increase in oil production which has translated to nothing for the ordinary citizens due to corruption?
Approaches and Methodologies for Community Buy-in

- Communal restitution from ex-militants with the genuine help from the Federal Government
- Opening the amnesty process to public scrutiny through a monitoring template
- Political repentance from indigenous politicians who have emerged at the centre through collective struggles of the Niger Delta people but only to conspire or hypocritically work against interest of the region, just for their selfish political gains.
- There cannot be buy-in without total clean up, remediation and environmental salvation of extractive and associated impacted communities.
- The BRaced initiative should have community component which should supplement drawback from the amnesty with a tool for impact evaluation.
- All processes for the development of the Niger Delta area should have a people oriented Value-for-Money Audit.
- Reconciliation of roles in the amnesty process between the NSA’s Office, NDDC, MNDAs and State Government within the Niger Delta, which should factor it the Civil Society as critical evaluators.
Challenges

- Cultural corruption and social dislocation
- Perception by some youths regarding militancy as the only medium for government recognition and empowerment
- Idling young persons away on pipeline surveillance contract
- Economic competition between youths and elders
- Adulteration of Es Spirit de Corps
- Donor fatigue and emerging politicization of Civil Society engagement(s) with government, IDPs, among others, due to interest and corruption
- Lack of disclosure and community centered disclosure with the amnesty process
- Tribal games by some politicians against collective spirit of inclusion of the region as one bonded people in the struggle.
- Half-baked empowerment against sustainable livelihoods for existing beneficiaries
Finding entry points for CSOs

- Monitoring and Evaluation of existing governance policies
- Collaboration and synergy with genuine IDPs in the region, who are here for development purposes and not those here to play politics of international diplomacy and information gathering
- Honest and concrete engagement of communities on environmental salvation and economic justice aimed at erasing some bad perception a few CSOs may have created by deceiving communities in the past
- Build linkages above geopolitics’ about the PIB in view of emerging information on the PIB becoming a political lobbying tool rather than for environmental justice, economic freedom and communal inclusion
- Post Amnesty Counseling Centers should be initiated by NGOs at militancy impacted communities with the Niger Delta area
- CSOs should make consistent efforts to know what is the budget for security from all tiers of government for the security of oil exploration activities in the Niger Delta
- Former Militants who are beneficiaries from the phase(s) of amnesty should form an Association as a pressure group for their sustainable livelihood and same time use same to monitor the conduct of all former militants, which would help to restore confidence of communities regarding those that committed atrocities against their own communities. Such Association can translates into Co Operative Societies for sustainable economic transformation with CSOs collaborating to build capacity of such Cooperatives
Conclusion and Recommendations

- The Book ‘Documenting the Amnesty Process in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria’ should be mass-produced and be distributed free to all Secondary and Tertiary Institutions in the Region by State Governments, with copies to CDCs, CDAs, CDFs, CCAs etc across the Region.
- There should be translation of the Book into local languages.
- Amnesty cannot transform the Niger Delta for sake of oil exploration and sustenance of the Nigerian State; therefore, recommendation(s) of the TCND should be implemented without further delay.
- Niger Deltans in positions of authority should cease to be the worst enemies of development against the Region.
- BRACED initiative should have a Civil Society component rather than total exclusion of communities and Civil Society.
- There should be immediate communal restitution from all ex-militants who committed atrocities against their own people.
Conclusion and Recommendations

- Politicians should stop promoting ethnic disharmony within the region
- Government agencies responsible for the amnesty implementation should be ready for full disclosure in line with the FOI Act
- Former militants should form themselves into Cooperatives for sustainable livelihood opportunities
- Former militants should refrain from falling back to illegal arms bearing and occasional aggression in order to breed confidence and trust in the society, which in turn, would generate employment opportunities
- State Governments should create a level playing empowerment opportunities for youths, thereby discouraging the mushrooming of militancy
- The Nigerian State should realize there is the possibility of an exacerbated militancy from the future generation, which could be hard to quell, should the government continue to take development of the Region for granted
- Inability of the Federal Government to domesticate EITI to community levels outside the (N–EITI) process being EI revenue monitoring agency for the Federal Government. It is a big setback. NEITI should therefore domesticate its existence to community levels in the next 24 months or should be scrapped if it fails to do so. The Orosanye Committee should have recommended this.
WE NEED PEACE, NON-VIOLENT APPROACHES AND DEVELOPMENT—NOT WAR.
End

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION