

THE NIGER DELTA PEOPLE'S VOLUNTEER FORCE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR RESOURCE CONTROL IN THE NIGER DELTA

***Fehintola Tunbosun Akinwale**

Abstract

The Niger Delta region is made up of many ethnic groups among which are Ijaw, Itsekiri, Urhobo, Isoko. Oil was officially discovered in commercial quantity in Oloibiri in 1956; this has turned the fortunes of the Nigerian economy for good. Expectedly, oil spillage and gas flaring are the major challenges confronting the people of the region. This has affected the delicate balance between man, land and water with the poverty, as people's means of livelihood were affected. Agitations for resource control for the assurance of better standard of living by the people have remained rife. It graduated from peaceful dialogues to unrest, violence and chaos. It subsequently assumed a dangerous trend with the emergence of militant groups, leading to loss of lives and property and hardship on the inhabitants. Numerous attacks on the oil facilities tremendously reduced the production of crude oil as well as loss of revenue to the state on daily basis. Based on existing studies this paper examines the activities of Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), one of the armed militants groups fighting for the self-determination of the *Black-Gold* in the Niger Delta and the significance of their insurgence to the region.

Keywords: Niger Delta, Struggle, Assessment, People's Volunteer Force, Resource control

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Introduction

The deplorable situation of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria as a result of environmental degradation has been attributed to so many factors out of which are the activities of the Nigerian State and that

of oil exploring Multinationals. Hurst-Croft succinctly posits “that the way Shell Petroleum Development Company exploits this pre-eminent position and the general conduct of other global oil companies not only negatively impact the Nigerian State, but more especially, the communities and environment of the Niger Delta are largely responsible for the unique problem of development and underdevelopment of Nigeria’s Niger Delta.”¹ Apart the Multinationals, other major groups involved in oil and gas enterprise include the Nigerian State and the NNPC as well as several small local Nigerian oil and gas contracting companies. Governments apparent inability to address the eventualities of oil spillage and gas flaring which is the prominent challenges bedeviling the region affect the general wellbeing of the people. Failure to provide a civic and political institution and enabling framework in which oppressed citizens could air their grievances and seek remedy further propelled the annoyance of the inhabitants of the area. They therefore, became trapped between global corporations and a visionless government that probably takes little or no cognisance of her citizenry. Interestingly, these local communities at the initial stage took to the path of non-violent protests aiming at driving home their request which includes peaceful marches, advocacy in the mass media, writing of petitions to the government, awareness-building seminars and so on.

Interesting and steadily growing studies have been produced on the Niger Delta. Naanen², Okoko³, Obi⁴ and Opukri & Ibaba⁵ posit that the region suffers severe ecological problems compared to the resources accrued from the region being a major source of revenue to the Nigerian economy. With the emergence of oil economy, local economies such as farming, fishing and trading have collapsed while oil and its activities had destabilised the natural flow of basic economic activity of the environment by degrading the land and water fertilities while alienating the people from the use of their natural resources. In the same vein, the state puts policies and laws that expropriate the rights of the natural owners from accessing the resources. Works such as Brown⁶, Salau⁷, Ibeanu⁸ and Watts⁹ revealed that gas flaring promote environmental degradation and reduction of soil nutrients while the

oil spillage kills fish in the rivers. For instance, there is 100% loss in the yield of crops planted 200 metres from flare sites. This is highly frustrating. And, since there is limit to human endurance, conflicts become inevitable in the bid to express ones grouse or displeasure which Anikpo¹⁰ describes as obstacles against the actualisation of set goals. This vividly describes the daily experience of the Niger Delta people with the attendant implications of militancy and violence. Often times, militia activities are spurred by frustration due to deprivation of life goals and aspirations as well as a threat to feeling of security. Despite the profundity of research on the Niger Delta, very few of these works have examined in any significant details the role of the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force and this is what this study attempts to fill.

Bases for Niger Delta's Grouse against the Nigerian State

The Nigeria's oil industry commenced with the discovery of oil deposits by the Anglo-Dutch group, Shell D'Archy, in commercial quantities in the small Niger Delta community of Oloibiri in 1956 in present day Bayelsa State. From this period, oil production has grown to dominate Nigeria's economy as well as the fiscal basis of the Nigerian State. It is estimated that from oil production alone, Nigeria generated about \$300 billion between 1970 and 2000. This apparently amounts to 96% of the country's foreign earnings. Nigeria's net oil revenues however, stood at \$45.1 billion in 2005 and about \$52.7 billion in 2006.¹¹ In addition, Nigeria earned a total of ₦5.561 trillion from oil and gas in 2011 alone. ₦4. 838 trillion of this amounts was left for distribution to the various levels of government, after 13% derivation was deducted.¹² Despite its availability in enormous quantity in the region, Niger Delta remained one of the poorest and least developed regions in Nigeria with the highest index of both infant and adult mortality rate as a result of environmental degradation due to the economic activities of the Multinational companies in the region. The area is drowned and entangled in deep crisis of environmental apocalypse, largely conditioned by the impacts of a poorly regulated oil industry and production.

CBN Ogbogbo argues that the imposition of the Pax Britannica had stripped the Niger Delta of its strategic economic importance and condemned the region to ultimate neglect in the allocation of infrastructural facilities by the colonial government.¹³ Osaghae however, opines that the major or bulk of crude oil, Nigeria's main source of revenue is derived from the Niger Delta, and that the region belongs to the ranks of the most backward and politically marginalized groups in the country. The skewing of the revenue sharing formula of the country against the derivation principle was a deliberate effort by the Nigerian state to aggravate the hope the people had for a better future when the *Black gold* was discovered in the region. Little wonder then, that the principles of revenue allocation deployed by the successive administrations in the country have been skewed.

A major source of Niger delta grouse against the Nigerian state is the issue of environmental degradation by the activities of the Multinational oil corporations in the region. In the words of Gbadegesin, Niger Delta people are irked by "...the continued degradation of the oil producing environment and the destruction of the means of livelihood of the inhabitants as a result of oil exploration activities, and the sub-standard drilling method that are being used."¹⁴ For instance, the major constituents used in cutting, such as barites and bentonite clays when dumped on the ground after usage prevent local plant growth until new top soils are developed through natural processes which takes a long period of time to heal, contribute to the environmental degradation of the region. And if dumped in the water system, the materials disperse and sink, and may eventually bury living plants and animals inhabiting the benthonic layer of the river system.¹⁵ In addition, is the atmospheric contaminants from refinery operations such as oxides of nitrogen, carbon and sulphur pollutes the environment while liquid refinery effluents oil and grease, suspend solids and biological oxygen pollutes land and water. Another negative environmental impact of oil and gas exploitation in the region is gas flaring. Nigeria is ranked the world's leading gas flaring country accounting for about 25% of the total global annual gas flaring.¹⁶ Ogbogbo corroborates this statement when he noted that production

of poisonous gases like nitrogen oxides, ammonia and sulphur dioxides during gas and other operations also add to the destructive effect, accounting for the prevalence of diseases like sore throat, sore eyes, nausea and running nose.¹⁷ This indicates that the people are living a precarious life, their lives could be terminated anytime due to life-threatening environmental pollution as a result of the economic activities of the multinational corporations in the area.

Similarly, oil spillage and leakage is a constant occurrence that occur either through accidental or through deliberate rupturing of crude and product pipeline, and more through the blowing up of oil well by insurgent groups.¹⁸ About 784 spills were recorded in Nigeria between 1976 & 1984, involving 2.1 billion barrels of crude oil.¹⁹ It is worthy of note that every spillage has an adverse effect on human being and their means of livelihood including farming, fishing, hunting, and other forestry-related economic ventures, and cleanliness of the air.²⁰ Oil related fire and exposing have also claimed hundreds of lives and properties in the region. In spite of the environmental hazard that had greeted the region, there is only one doctor for every 150,000 inhabitants. Government presence is only felt in the region in the form of machine gun and jackboots. According to Osaghae, roads, potable water and electricity supply, health care facilities and public schools facilities are poorly developed despite the fact that areas occupied by the multinationals and their privileged employees boast of state of the art facilities.²¹ The expatriates live in affluence, a direct opposite to the type the inhabitants live, despite that the resources accrue from their fatherland. There is no gainsaying that the region remains poorest in Nigeria in terms of infrastructural facilities, services, non-oil based industries and other developmental indicators.²² The Nigerian government often hides under the pretense of the 1978 Land Act to further intensify its expropriation of land resources of the people.

The Niger Delta presents a curious irony²³ of the Nigerian State: people who live in coastal areas, with lots of fresh water sources do not have drinkable water, due largely to the activities of oil companies in the area. This is similar to the proverbial tragedy of “*a meat seller that eats bone.*”²⁴ Niger Delta creeks are littered

with pipelines crisscrossing, bearing petroleum products to other parts of the country. The irony of this is that in this same Niger Delta, fuel is scarce and expensive. For instance, the cost of petroleum is higher in Yenagoa than Kano.²⁵ Revenue from crude oil sale is used to provide infrastructure in other parts of Nigeria; the beautiful roads in Abuja, the skyscrapers in Lagos, the flyovers across the country, while many communities in the Niger Delta are cut off from civilization because there are no roads or bridges that could lead them to their next community.²⁶

This paper posits that unlike in Europe and America where jobs were created on account of oil exploration, in the Niger Delta, youths are largely unemployed. Moreover, unrestrained exploitation of the environmental resources is done at the expense of the oil producing communities in the Niger Delta, which do not benefit enough from the oil revenue.²⁷ One important element of conflicts in the area is the attachment to development. Development in this regard means the people's ability to maintain their cultural values and sustain their traditional economic resources. Weighed against the background of the immense resources Nigeria generates from the area, the Niger Delta region could be said to be underdeveloped especially when compared to places like Lagos, Abuja, Kano and Kaduna, which are being developed with oil money. Another major cause of Niger Delta agitation is the issue of marginalization and political underrepresentation²⁸ as the people felt that they lack a political voice, stemming from federal system of government that is unitary, thereby giving the states limited powers. This, the Niger Delta believed has not been favourable to them because they belong to the minority group while the government has been dominated by the three majority groups mainly, Hausa-Fulani ethnic group followed by the Yoruba and sparing number of the Igbo.²⁹

Also government's failure to deliver developmental benefits to the region, despite the massive returns from the oil exploration and exploitation is a huge cause of agitation. To the people, they had nothing to show for the exploitation of their God's given wealth. They therefore sought for self-determination and resource control in order to reverse decades of political and

economic marginalization. Obi posits that as oil rent flowed directly to the state coffers, those who controlled state power and occupied strategic positions not only used their office as an instrument to control oil but also as a means of amassing wealth.³⁰ Furthermore, are the activities of the multinational oil corporations particularly, Shell and Chevron, as well as the deft collaborations between the state and these corporations.³¹ They have been accused of wantonly carrying out the oil exploration without due regard for the international laws and conventions for the protection of the environment. These companies pursue profits at the detriment of the environment. They were also accused of supplying the logistics for the military dominated state in its callous repression of opposition from the Niger Delta.³² Whenever there is a dispute between communities, the multinationals seize the opportunity to intensify conflicts in the region by taking side with one against the other in order to break ranks among the people so as not to have one voice against them and the Nigerian State.

The Niger Delta region has been wallowing under the ills of youth unemployment. The region has the highest record of unemployment in Nigeria. This explains why a huge number of youth roam the street with the feeling of alienation. Unemployment made youth activism, militancy and rebelliousness a common phenomenon in the Niger Delta³³ which has culminated to the emergence of various militant groups demanding for self-determination and resource control of the region from the Nigerian state. Similarly, there is a lack of basic amenities and infrastructure. Take for instance, schools and health facilities are often very difficult to come by. On average, there is one primary school per 3,700 pupils, one secondary school to 14,679 students. Each primary health centre is shared by 43 settlements on average, secondary health centre are fewer where available, it is disappointing.³⁴ The quality of education received by these children has dropped as a result of lack of quality of teachers and lack of basic instructional materials.

Emergence of Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF)

The agitation for ownership and control of resources began with Isaac Adaka Boro's³⁵ insurrection and declaration of an independent Niger Delta Republic. The declaration by Nigeria's first Niger Delta ethnic militia, during what is known as a 12-day revolution awakened the consciousness of Ijaw people to take action against oppression and exploitation.³⁶ This was necessitated by social neglect, ethnic chauvinism, political marginalization and economic strangulation orchestrated by the Nigerian ruling elites. These were made clear by Major Isaac Boro while addressing his men and drawing the attention of the world to the anomalies on the morning of February 23, he averred that "today is a great day, not only in your lives but also in the history of the Niger Delta. Perhaps it will be the greatest for a very long time. This is not because we are going to bring the heavens down, but because we are going to demonstrate to the world, what and how we feel about oppression."³⁷ The death of Kenule Saro Wiwa marked the beginning of militancy in the Niger Delta struggle. Instead of serving as a restraint to other prospective militants, his death led to the emergence of a number of other militant groups in the Niger Delta among which was Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force.³⁸ The demand for ownership and control of oil and gas by the Niger Delta people was instigated by the Ogoni people in 1990. They issued the Ogoni Bills of Rights, which included the explicit demand for ownership and control of their resource, and blazed the trail for several other groups in the Niger Delta who joined in regional agitation for greater resources control.³⁹

Emerging as one of the kindlers was the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF). Its arch enemy was the Nigerian state. The oil firms, seen as colluding with the government, were quickly caught in the line of fire. The Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF) emerged in the late 1990s in an attempt to gain more control over the region's resources. It was founded by Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari, popularly called Asari. His heroes were Isaac Adaka Boro, Osama Bin Ladin, Nelson Mandela, among others.⁴⁰ The activities of this group came into national and international lime light as one of the major ethnic

militia groups that confronted the Federal government in their quest for resource control. Their declaration asserted the alienation rights of the Ijaw to own and control the resources within their territory. They all sought to end what was regarded as the oppression of the Ijaw by the Nigerian state and the Multinational Corporations.⁴¹ In 2004, the group threatened to attack foreign oil workers and launched a guerrilla war that caused scares in global oil markets.⁴² They threatened to attack pipelines and oil installations and this forced oil companies to withdraw, leading to drop in oil production.⁴³

Since the emergence of this group, open rebellion, has increased and become the pattern in the Niger Delta. Attacking of oil pipelines and oil bunkering, violence, kidnapping has become very popular. Asari and his group were serious players in the lucrative oil bunkering trade. Their justification for stealing oil was simple: The oil belongs to the Delta people in the first place.⁴⁴ They admitted to be involved in illegal bunkering and private refinery activities. And this was the basis of Asari's defense, "I am not an illegal bunkerer. I am taking what belong to my people and giving it back to them, this same oil, I am refining it and selling at ₦15 per litre in the riverine areas. It is ₦15 per litre"⁴⁵ The money made from stolen oil funded weapons purchases as well as Asari's ambition as he raised his objectives from local gang fights to political aspirations, publicly claiming independence for the nations of the Delta. Asari's platform in this respect was the Ijaw Youth Council. Asari became President of the Ijaw Youth Council, an ethnic rights group, in 2001. He immediately changed the slogan of the body to 'Resource Control and Self Determination By Every Means Necessary', signaling his readiness to battle with the Nigerian State. The group condemned the 2003 elections, won by President Olusegun Obasanjo, as a fraud in full-page newspaper adverts. Not surprisingly, this did not go down well with the president, while other political stalwarts were also provoked. For instance, Peter Odili, Governor of Rivers State had been NDPVF's financial supporter until the April 2003 local and state elections. After publicly criticizing the election process as fraudulent, the Odili government withdrew its financial support from the NDPVF

and began to support Ateke Tom's Niger Delta Volunteer (NDV), effectively launching a paramilitary campaign against the NDPVF. The State campaign against the NDPVF emboldened Asari who began publicly articulating populist, anti-government views and attempted to frame the conflict in terms of pan-Ijaw nationalism and self-determination.

Consequently, the Rivers State government escalated the campaign against the group by bringing in armed forces that began occupation of Port Harcourt in June 2004. At the end of August 2004, there were several intense battles over the Port Harcourt waterfront in which residential slums were completely destroyed. By September 2004 the situation was rapidly approaching a violent climax, catching the full attention of the international press. After the launching of a mission to wipe out NDPVF, officially approved by President Olusegun Obasanjo in early September 2004, this militant group declared all-out war with the Nigerian state, as well as, the oil corporations and threatened to disrupt oil production activities through attacks on wells and pipelines. The statement helped drive oil-futures prices above \$50 for the first time ever and quickly caused a major crisis on September 26, when Shell evacuated 235 non-essential personnel from two oil fields, cutting oil production by 30,000 barrels a day.

Aims and Objectives of Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force

The primary aim of the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force is to promote and protect the interests of the oil producing Ijaw ethnic nationality in the Niger Delta. The major demand of the group is the actualization of the famous KAIAMA Declaration. The Declaration sought to establish Ijaw sovereignty over its natural resources. The group is notorious for conducting periodic raids on oil installations. This has brought constant showdown between the State, and Dokubo and his paladins mostly unemployed youths. Additionally, the NDVPF had demanded for the convocation of a Sovereign National Conference (SNC), where the contentious issues of self-determination and resource control would be discussed and concluded. Also, the NDVPF had insisted on the abrogation of all laws that deprive the people the right to their

resources as well as an end to the environmental degradation of the Niger Delta by the oil companies. While condemning the 2005 National Political Reform Conference and call for people's conference, Dokubo stated, "We do not believe in this charade", condemning it in its entirety. "We therefore, restate our minimum demand for the convocation of *a true conference* of credible representatives of the ethnic nations in the Nigerian space. That is the only avenue where we can speak, not in muffled tones but engage ourselves in frank and open debates on the real way forward".⁴⁶

Among the militants group in the region, the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force's leader came closest to the Isaac Adaka Boro's model. Whilst in detention at the Government cell in Abuja as a result of his radical views which according to the Obasanjo's Presidency, bordered on treasonable felony, from 2005 to June 2007, did not stop him from defending the basis of his struggle.⁴⁷ For instance, in an interview with Tell Magazine, Dokubo Asari saw state governors as executive cheer leaders, law makers as Ghana-must-go legislators, royal fathers as double-speak traditional rulers, and the youth as followers-less youth leaders.⁴⁸ On his release on bail from detention by President Yar'Adua, in June 2007, Dokubo-Asari again reiterated that only a Sovereign National Conference was capable of ending the crisis in the Niger Delta.⁴⁹

Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force: Strategy and Tactics

The major strategy of the NDPVF was economic sabotage often employed by subalterns in asymmetric war environment. Through various activities such as pipeline vandalization, oil bunkering, kidnapping and hostage-taking of local and foreign oil companies' staff and the disruption of oil exploration and exploitation activities made the Niger Delta states increasingly difficult to govern. These activities were targeted to hit the oil industry and invariably, the revenues that accrued to the Federal government from oil sales. Eghosa Osaghae observes that the clandestine and militia groups were mainly distinguished by their violent, terrorist, and criminal strategies of resistance, which included illegal bunkering, piracy on the high seas, abductions and kidnappings of oil workers,

blockages/closure of oil wells, and other sabotage activities. They are also the major actors in confrontations and violent conflicts with state military, police and security forces, as well as in the communal clashes involving rival communities.⁵⁰ Most times they react to policies they regarded as unfavourable to their people's interest by reprisals through the venting of anger on the oil companies' staff, facilities and interests within the Niger Delta. For instance, the reactions that attended the Supreme Court's judgment on the onshore/offshore dichotomy and the negative response of the National Political Reform Conference to their demand for 50% allocation based on the derivation principle are indicative of how sensitive the groups were to these national positions.⁵¹ They became more and more proactive, with their guns booming more frequently as they increasingly clashed with the Nigerian military personnel deployed or stationed in this warring zone.⁵²

In the words of Tamuno, at that critical point in Nigeria's politics and governance, at least, two major pathways seemed open to militants in the Niger Delta; one was the channel of compromise adopted by elders while the other was the barrel of the gun route preferred by disgruntled youths. These major pathways attempted to give the Niger Delta Question a place on the national front burner.⁵³ For instance, the federal government was forced to negotiate a cease fire⁵⁴ with the militant group as a result of pressure exerting on her by the major international stakeholders, especially the United States of America consequent upon Asari's threat to blow up oil installations in early 2005, that attracted world attention because of the effect it would have on shooting up of crude oil prices.

Government's Response to the Agitations

The responses of government and the multinational corporations to the agitations of the people had always been brutal and repressive in nature. More often than not, whenever government tried to quell the youths revolting in response to environmental degradation, they are usually felled by the bullets of the government troops. An instance was the federal government massacre of youths in Yenagoa for demanding for provision of basic amenities like good

roads, schools, etc. In addition, Nigerian government leveled Kaiama after the youth issued the Kaiama Declarations, demanding for resource control.⁵⁵ Government employed tactics aimed at creating ranks among the people in the region by a way of giving money to some community leaders to speak on the side of the government and to also create divisions among the various ethnic groups so as not to have a coordinated voice against the Nigerian state. Also, it was reported that some Niger Delta legislators were approached to drop the issue of resource control, if they want to be nominated for political offices they held.

The issue of onshore and offshore dichotomy⁵⁶ between the federal government and the littoral states of the region that sought legal approach to the Niger Delta's agitations resulted into loss of revenue from offshore oil exploitation to the federal government. Creation of state was another avenue through which the federal government responded to Niger Delta questions. In corroborating this, Ogbogbo argues that the state creation was a means through which major ethnic groups marginalised the minority groups and to accumulate wealth for their personal gains especially the Niger Delta groups.⁵⁷

Achievements of Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force

Government's attempt at establishing institutions saddled with the responsibility to address the issue of the Niger Delta's agitations could be regarded as an achievement on the part of militant groups who had engaged the government and the multinational oil corporations in long battles to demand resource control and self-determination since 1990s. Several attempts had been made by past administrations to address the Niger Delta agitations but with the advent of militant groups in the scene, the mode of agitation took another dimension – militancy. Therefore, at the inception of Obasanjo's administration in 1999, he sent to the National Assembly a bill for the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission to take charge of the development of the region.⁵⁸ The basic mandate of the Commission was to address the environmental and development challenges facing this region. The Commission was also to conceive, plan and implement projects that

are capable of fostering the development of the oil region in line with set rules and regulations. Section 7 of the Act establishing the Commission stipulates that the NNDC shall formulate policies and guidelines for the development of the Niger Delta.

Another step taken by the government was the increase of the derivative formula to 13%. The increase in the revenue allocation formula has meant that the oil producing states have more revenue for developmental purposes, if wisely used. Similarly, the Niger Delta Technical Committee was commissioned on the 4th September, 2008. The Commission was charged with the responsibility to collate, review and distil the various reports, suggestions and recommendations on the Niger Delta right from the Willinks Commission report of 1958 to the present day, and give a summary of the recommendations necessary for government actions, to appraise the recommendations and present a detailed short, medium and long-term suggestions to the challenges in the Niger Delta and to make recommendations that will help the federal government achieve sustainable development, peace, human and environmental security in the Niger Delta region.

In addition, the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs was created on the 10th of September, 2008. The Ministry was charged with the mandate of infrastructural development for the region and youth empowerment. The ministry was also responsible for the coordination and execution of federal government's projects which includes construction of roads, electrification and the provision of other social amenities. Albeit, all these moves were not fully implemented by the Nigerian State as these promises remain dreams and visions begging to see the light of the day. And finally, the Amnesty programme. On 25th June, 2009, President Umar Musa Yar'Adua granted amnesty to everybody who had involved in militant activities in the Niger Delta where militants in their hundreds came out to surrender their arms and ammunitions. Coupled with the above was the fact that the former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan (2011-2015) hailed from this area brought relative peace to the activities of the militants in the region and Nigeria as a whole during his tenure.

Conclusion

The Niger Deltas agitation is a protest against the failure of the Nigerian state to ensure that there is justice and a collective sense of belonging to the oil wealth in the region. Despite their protests both within and at the international level, the attitude of the successive governments to the plight of the people's loathsomeness on the use of force by the government to suppress their right to economic control of resources continued to give unflinching support to the course of fighting for their rights even in the face of unpredictable challenges. The situation is thus summarized as militants have reached a point where the only choice they found attractive *is to* destroy the goose that lays the golden egg, simply because the goose is more useful to other people rather than its owners. However, the elevation of the use of force as a conflict management strategy, by the NDPVF being one of the militant groups in the region has succeeded in turning world attention to the horrific carnage going on in the region as oil which supposed to have brought better living conditions to the people had succeeded in imposing insecurity, inter-ethnic feud, conflicts, violence and social tension on the people with the attendant implications of lack of social services, infrastructural development, economic and social underdevelopment. The Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force on its part had blazed unforgettable trails on behalf of their distressed communities in the Niger Delta with the utmost aims and objectives of selfless struggle for resource control and self-determination for their divinely endowed *Black Gold* which has constantly put the Nigerian state on her toes considering the significance of the region to the socio-economic and political stability of Nigeria.

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