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THE CHALLENGES OF REINTEGRATION IN POST-CONFLICT PEACEBUILDING: THE CASE OF NIGERIA'S NIGER DELTA REGION

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ABOUT THE SERIES

“African solutions to African problems” is a favorite mantra of the African Union, but since the 2002 establishment of the African Peace and Security Architecture, the continent has continued to face political, material, and knowledge-related challenges to building sustainable peace. Peacebuilding in Africa has sometimes been characterized by interventions by international actors who lack the local knowledge and lived experience needed to fully address complex conflict-related issues on the continent. And researchers living and working in Africa need additional resources and platforms to shape global debates on peacebuilding as well as influence regional and international policy and practitioner audiences. The APN Working Papers series seeks to address these knowledge gaps and needs by publishing independent research that provides critical overviews and reflections on the state of the field, stimulates new thinking on overlooked or emerging areas of African peacebuilding, and engages scholarly and policy communities with a vested interest in building peace on the continent.

THE CHALLENGES OF REINTEGRATION IN POST-CONFLICT PEACEBUILDING: THE CASE OF NIGERIA'S NIGER DELTA REGION

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INTRODUCTION

The end of the Cold War shifted the focus from international wars between states to internal wars with immense consequences for unarmed civilians, such as occurred in the African countries of Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Liberia, Somalia, and Sudan, to mention a few.¹ The nature of these wars makes these countries susceptible to further wars. To avoid such conflict traps, peace-building measures such as disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) have been introduced to pave the way for an easier transition from conflict to peace, by minimizing risks from ex-combatants as possible spoilers and, restoring hope and security to victims of conflict while developing their communities.²

Evidence from countries that have utilized DDR, such as Angola, DRC, Somalia, and Liberia, suggests that while disarmament and demobilization may be essential, reintegration remains the most critical component of post-conflict peace and security.³ Debate continues over the notion that while disarmament and demobilization entail short-term security operations, they do not by themselves bring sustainable benefits; reintegration

focuses on extensive long-term development efforts that are critical to avoiding the conflict trap and sustaining peace in the long run. Short-term security does not bring about sustainable benefits unless it is coordinated with long-term community development strategies. Reintegration addresses the economic and social transformation of both ex-combatants and the overall communities they are joining, yet the full implementation of this process is generally ignored in DDR programs in post-conflict countries. This paper focuses on the extent of implementation of the reintegration phase in the Niger Delta region's post-conflict (usually called post-amnesty) period and its impact on peace, security, and development in the region.

The Nigerian federal government embraced the post-amnesty DDR concept in June 2009 to set the pace for gradual resolution of the violence that had embroiled the region for almost a decade. During the execution of the disarmament and demobilization phases, the Niger Delta region recorded initial progress in peace and security demonstrated by an increase in oil production from an estimated 700 barrels per day (bpd) to an estimated 2,500 bpd in early 2010. However, the implementation of the reintegration phase has raised several questions due to the region's relapse into violence and crime. There is, therefore, a need to investigate the factors working against successful implementation of the reintegration process.

A critical analysis of the process will enhance the understanding of scholars and policymakers alike on what constitutes sustainable reintegration and at the same time, how it may be achieved in post-conflict societies. The focus on reintegration is meant to facilitate a specific consideration of its importance as the point of intersection between short- and long-term peacebuilding processes.

Methodology

This study draws on both primary and secondary data. Secondary data include books, journal articles, newspaper articles, academic magazines, non-governmental organization (NGO) publications, and internet sources. However, this study would have been impossible without detailed primary research in the Peremabiri and Olugbobiri communities in the Southern Ijaw local government area as well as in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, and the Bukuma and Bakana communities in the Degema local government area and Okrika, Rivers State, Nigeria, from December 2012 to May 2013, along with the use of Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) office reports and

other official documents.

These communities were hotbeds of crises during the era of militancy. Moreover, some ex-warlords are indigenes of these communities. For instance, Ogun Boss is an indigene of Peremabiri while Africa and Joshua McKaiver are indigenes of Olugbobiri. Ateke Tom is an indigene of Okrika and Farah Dagogo is from Tombia, which is only a few kilometers away from Bukuma, in Rivers State.⁴

Face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and first-hand observations served as instruments for the collection of data from ex-militants (both male and female), chiefs, youth leaders, community leaders, women leaders, locals and Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) staff in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, and staff in the office of the Special Adviser to the President on Amnesty in Abuja.

Apart from several face-to-face interviews in Rivers and Bayelsa states and the Presidential Amnesty Programme office in Abuja, two sets of FGDs with five members each were held in the Peremabiri and Olugbobiri communities. Two additional sets of FGDs were held in Yenagoa, coupled with another set of discussions with some female ex-militants in Yenagoa. In Rivers State, a set of FGDs was held only in Bukuma. Due to security problems, it was extremely difficult to gain access to groups of ex-militants in Okrika and Bakana; therefore, the focus of the study was on face-to-face interviews with only a few ex-militants. In-depth observation of ex-militants and residents was indeed germane to this research. Two assistant researchers from Niger Delta University (NDU), Bayelsa State and University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, were employed to cover their respective states. Samples were selected through snowball and purposive sampling methods, and preparation of an interview guide set the platform for acquiring information from respondents. Questions focused on issues leading to conflicts and militancy, the nature of the post-amnesty reintegration process, and benefits and challenges of reintegration for ex-militants and communities in the region. Questions were analyzed through the qualitative approach, and those results served as outcomes of the research.

Conceptualizing Reintegration

Countries having once suffered from conflict have a tendency to relapse, with the peacetime gradually shortening between conflicts. Accordingly, in

his 1995 *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace*, Boutros Boutros-Ghali identified the elements linked to preventing a recurrence of violence as: disarming warring factions, restoring law and order, decommissioning and destroying weapons, reforming and strengthening institutions of governance, and facilitating socioeconomic development. Subsequently, the United Nations (UN) has embraced the concept of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) as an essential element of its multidimensional peacebuilding role. It is therefore not surprising that African countries that had suffered protracted conflicts, political violence, and inter-communal strife, including Angola, Burundi, CAR, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Liberia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, and Somalia, drew from the UN peacebuilding mechanisms to resolve their deep-seated crises.

Evidence from specific country cases has revealed that while disarmament and demobilization may be essential, reintegration remains the most critical element in post-conflict peace and security. It is globally accepted that in the three-fold DDR concept, disarmament and demobilization are the first part of the process, normally the most straight-forward, and usually with short-term goals and a complex range of challenges. But the “R” or reintegration phase is a long-term phenomenon that is critical in preventing conflict relapse. As might be expected, it is also the most complex and most time-consuming phase.⁵ The fact that it is a process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status, and gain sustainable employment and income makes this phase critical to peacebuilding.⁶ But its open time frame and the need to involve the communities affected by violence in initiatives ranging from security reforms and transitional justice to political and economic reconstruction highlight its complexity.⁷ These efforts entail total commitment, financial buoyancy, accountability, transparency, and local support from the implementing agencies.⁸

Researchers have identified the elements of successful reintegration.⁹ To begin with, it requires the empowerment of both veterans and families in productive activities such as vocational training, apprenticeships, and formal education. There must also be provisions for job creation, support for job searches, and access to land, credits, and technical assistance, as well as support in identifying market needs. The successful reintegration of ex-combatants presupposes a community that is socially and economically ready and available to receive them.¹⁰

Current debates emerging from experiences of failed reintegration, how-

ever, now revolve around whether to devote attention either to individual ex-combatants (veterans) who pose serious physical security threats or to the broader community (civilians), or to address both simultaneously.¹¹ These debates have revealed that though combining both individual and community reintegration initiatives is the most productive approach to engaging in development and reconstruction of fragile and post-conflict states, most war-torn states in Africa usually concentrate on individual reintegration, with sparse or no involvement in community development. Attention to ex-militants is based on the premise that successful reintegration of ex-militants would provide them with individually tailored projects, and would, in the final analysis, discourage a recurrence of conflict.

The World Bank has concluded that focusing on individual ex-combatants reduces security risks and, in return, ex-warring groups can act as economic “catalysts” for their communities.¹² However, those countries that prioritize individual over community reintegration have failed to record tangible success, due to community disenchantment over the privileging of ex-combatants who perpetrated crimes (considering that civilians are equally impoverished and in need of economic aid); community refusal to accept ex-combatants; and lack of appropriate linkage with the revitalization of social capital. Affected post-conflict countries that have failed to treat this problem have witnessed the formation of criminal gangs and militia groups which engage in crimes, including the trade of drugs, stolen goods, and illicit weapons, as occurred in Angola, DRC, and Liberia.¹³

In this context, the role of the community cannot be over-emphasized. “Community” in this case refers to a social ecology often depleted by the scourges of conflict and thereby experiencing weakened social capital due to death, displacement, and loss.¹⁴ As the community’s weakened state contributes to its inability to protect itself, there remains the very real possibility that there could be a renewal of unresolved ethnic hatreds, social cleavages, and violence if these issues are not promptly addressed at the reintegration level.¹⁵ Since conflict has destabilized the pre-war community, it is essential that community-based reintegration is strengthened and consolidated in order to assist in returning ex-militants to pre-war communities that have been restored and ideally improved.¹⁶ For instance, in Sierra Leone, the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (NCDDR), realizing the effects of the war on the communities in general, opted for a community-centered approach to reintegration while effectively consolidating individual reintegration. Based on its programming

and implementation, Sierra Leone has become a DDR success story.¹⁷ The extent to which Nigeria's Niger Delta region has been able to achieve both individual and community reintegration in an attempt to ensure peace and stability is the basis for this study.

A SYNOPSIS OF THE NIGER DELTA CONFLICT

At the root of the conflict in the Niger Delta is the issue of oil and its control. Until 1958 when Shell D'Arcy discovered fossil fuel in Oloibiri (which is now located in the present Ogbia local government area of Bayelsa State), the Niger Delta region was predominantly agrarian, poor, and known mostly for its bad terrain of swamps and creeks. The discovery of crude oil in other parts of the region subsequently transformed the Niger Delta's political and economic landscape. Natural resources fund eighty-five percent of Nigeria's budget and have been responsible for ninety-nine percent of Nigeria's main foreign exchange earnings, from 1973 to the present.¹⁸ The discovery and exploration of crude oil in commercial quantities have overshadowed and destroyed the traditional livelihoods of the region's residents, which revolved around fishing and farming. Thus, the Niger Delta region represents a paradox of oil wealth and impoverishment. Indeed, the region falls below the national average in all indicators of development due to the extent of environmental degradation (oil spills and gas flaring in a very fragile terrain), abject poverty, high unemployment, social deprivation, filth and squalor, tenuous property rights, and high mortality rate, all against the backdrop of international oil politics.¹⁹ Unfortunately, the state's draconian laws, such as the Land Use Decree, block the Niger Delta's access to control of the revenues derived from the region.²⁰ Exacerbating this situation is the politics of local authorities who have compounded the poverty of their communities by gaining control over compensation payments from oil companies.²¹ Beyond this, communities have experienced intra- and inter-community conflicts in the oil-producing areas over a range of issues, including payments to communities, land acquisitions, and environmental damage.

In the Niger Delta region, the political ecology of oil has pitted transnational oil corporations (TNOCs) and the state against the local communities.²² With the onset of the economic crisis in the early 1990s and the deep-seated feelings of neglect experienced by the communities, the struggle over oil intensified. In most cases, village protests were met with heavy military reprisal attacks at the behest of oil multinationals.²³ In response to the

state's militaristic attitudes towards them, innocent protesters, comprised mainly of Niger Delta youth and women employed forceful means to express their anger, mistrust, bitterness, and frustration. But beginning in the mid-1990s, the Niger Delta region became a zone of insurrection in which various militia groups, including cult groups, evolved as part of a complex mix of political forces across the oilfields.²⁴

Not only did their activities affect TNOCs and the state, but private businesses in the region were physically and financially affected as well. In the first seven months of 2009 alone, the government lost USD20.7 billion in oil revenue due to militant activities as well as an estimated USD3 billion due to illegal oil bunkering.²⁵

State policy regarding the conditions in the region was not solely militaristic. At various points, institutional, fiscal, and legal mechanisms were employed in an attempt to manage the crises and encourage rapid development in the region. However, owing to discontinuities and lack of coherence and commitment in the state's political culture, all the aforementioned efforts failed to produce sustainable peace in the region, as the payoffs were paltry compared to the gains from illegal activities.²⁶

The use of military personnel to quell community protests and disturbances was, in fact, more successful in frustrating the oil-rich communities which accounted for the most oil exploration and exploitation.²⁷ Consequently, militant groups responded with heavy attacks through 2009, leading to complex humanitarian emergencies, and the need to secure the region's oil interests by searching for sustainable solutions to the crises.

One major effort that paved the way for peace was the opening of a sixty-day amnesty window from August 6 to October 4, 2009, which had been a major recommendation by the Technical Committee of the Niger Delta (TCND) to the federal government.²⁸ Though some militant groups rejected the amnesty, 26,358 militants accepted it (in two caseloads), and surrendered their weapons through a disarmament program that collected guns, grenades, rifles, machine guns, rocket launchers, and more.²⁹ Disarmament of militants qualified them for a reinsertion package, including a N65,000 monthly stipend over a five-year timeline.³⁰ Surrendering their arms also qualified them for a demobilization program; following the completion of demobilization, reintegration emerged as the third phase of the post-amnesty DDR program.³¹

IMPLEMENTING THE REINTEGRATION PHASE IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION

Reintegration, as explained earlier, is pertinent in assisting ex-combatants, victims of violence, and communities affected by such violence return to normal, productive lives. It involves simultaneously empowering ex-militants and embracing victims through devoted attention to the socio-economic development of their communities. Thus, the process involves two components, namely, individual and community reintegration.

INDIVIDUAL REINTEGRATION

Individual reintegration offers benefits to ex-combatants after demobilization and rehabilitation. A common measure in post-conflict societies, it focuses on the rehabilitation, reinsertion, and training of ex-militants. In the Niger Delta region, individual reintegration of ex-militants followed a sequence: payment of reinsertion allowance, training, and employment opportunities.

Payment of Reinsertion Allowance

Acceptance of amnesty and subsequent disarmament, qualified ex-militants for payment of reinsertion allowances, through a program that remains ongoing in the region. Reinsertion assistance is a transitional, short-term, and interim support mechanism, a safety net that links the demobilization and reintegration phases.³² The UN (2005) defines reinsertion assistance as:

...assistance offered to ex-combatants during demobilization, but prior to the long-term process of reintegration, as a form of transitional assistance to help cover the basic needs of ex-combatants and their families, which may include transitional safety allowances, food, clothes, shelter, medical services, short-term education, training and employment tools.³³

Reinsertion assistance helps to sustain reintegration of ex-combatants; failure to offer reinsertion allowances could result in protests and threats to state security. Reinsertion packages vary. They could involve cash or material incentives. In South Sudan, ex-combatants' reinsertion support comprised a cash grant of SDG 60 (USD 300), non-food items, and a voucher for three months of food for a family of five.³⁴ The duration of reinsertion payment is usually specified, but studies have revealed that it generally lasts much longer.

In the Niger Delta in 2012, reintegration support consisted of a monthly stipend of N65,000 (USD420) and rent allowance of N150,000. Some ex-combatants invested their stipends in basic and luxury needs for themselves and their families, including establishing businesses, building houses, and purchasing vehicles, while ex-warlords became sudden billionaires due to extra reinsertion awards in the form of lucrative contracts.³⁵ This measure contributed immensely to the immediate stemming of violence and the return of the oil and gas sector to its boom-era conditions.

Training

The reintegration process provides the platform for training ex-combatants in literacy, numeracy, and entrepreneurship. It aims to help beneficiaries engage in sustainable livelihoods and aid in socio-economic recovery efforts. The argument for training was corroborated by one ex-militant:

If you give me money and I don't know how to use it, it will finish. But if you give me training, at least, I will have something that will be for the rest of my life. Whatever you are trained for, will help to mobilize money.³⁶

Training helps contribute to the re-establishment of values and norms that regulate and give meaning to family and community life while paving the way for ex-militants to develop a new sense of identity that is not linked to the war.³⁷ The Niger Delta foreign training program for ex-militants is unique within the African post-conflict DDR milieu and reflects its home-grown character, unlike similar programs in other African countries, where reintegration is managed financially and technically by international donors. Two major actors, the state, and the oil industry, sponsored the training of ex-militants. Several oil companies formed the Oil and Gas Industry Foundation (OGIF) and contributed funds totaling USD30.3 million towards training 3,000 out of the total 26,364 ex-militants, compensation to the region for years of oil exploration, exploitation, and environmental degradation.³⁸ While OGIF focused on short-term skills empowerment, the federal government oversaw both short- and long-term empowerment of ex-militants, including a provision for formal education.³⁹ Both actors hired consultants and contractors as implementing partners to help with logistics for local and foreign training.⁴⁰ Upon completion of the training program, participants were tested both practically and through written tests, and following successful completion of those exams were issued a certificate.⁴¹

Employment Opportunities

Relinquishing ties with wartime social networks and readapting to normal civilian life requires employment opportunities if trained, ex-combatants are to avoid the conflict trap. The need for jobs in post-conflict peacebuilding was recognized as early as 1919 when the Treaty of Versailles stipulated that employment promotion was critical for building sustainable peace.⁴² Employment opportunities have been the most difficult aspect of individual reintegration in the Niger Delta. However, some trained ex-militants have been fortunate to gain employment in the organizations where they were trained, while others have engaged in various businesses.⁴³ Profits earned from those businesses along with amnesty stipends have created the means for housing and survival for those ex-militants and their families.⁴⁴ Yet the majority of ex-combatants have depended on stopgap or casual jobs; “contract jobs” provided by the oil and gas industry which involve repairing pipelines, constructing band walls around gas pipes, dredging waterways, and other oil-related works.⁴⁵ Some ex-combatants have found employment as security guards for group commanders’ mansions and edifices.⁴⁶

COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION

Reconciliation of Ex-Militants with Communities

Reconciliation is both a process and a goal that intersects with DDR. It is one of the major requirements for durable and sustainable peace.⁴⁷ In Africa, countries such as South Africa, (1998), Zimbabwe (1995), Sierra Leone (2000), Ghana (2001), Mozambique (1991), Rwanda (2001), and Liberia (2006) have adopted a reconciliation process to help bring their societies back from violence to peace.⁴⁸ These processes were necessary to change the negative perceptions, mistrust, and ill-feelings that communities held against ex-militants, and to resolve problems of deep community fragmentation.

One example of this process is the Foundation for Ethnic Harmony in Nigeria (FEHN), with the supported by OGIF, engaged some ex-militants in a proactive reconciliation with their communities, through the Community Outreach Programme (COP). This program was designed to further deepen the transformation of youths as they reintegrated into their various communities. The criteria for community selection were not especially clear, but at the time of this study, only the communities of Okrika, Ikwerre,

Degema, Gelegele, Sagbama, Angiama, Nembe, Salgu, Southern Ijaw, and Egbema within Bayelsa and Rivers states had benefitted from the program.⁴⁹

In Okrika, a formal ritual of reunification brought ex-militant groups (Icelanders and Bush Boys), community members, chiefs, and traditional rulers together at the town hall in 2011.⁵⁰ The process was similar to Sierra Leone's "Palaver Hut" (a berei mu meni saa) system and the concept of "Ubuntu" in South Africa.⁵¹ According to one participant, "the Bush Boys said they were doing what they felt was the right thing then and the Icelanders, led by Ateke Tom, said they were after those people who were against them and not neutral ones."⁵² Afterwards, the ex-militants embraced the notion of guilt acknowledgment, and the need to show remorse and repentance, asking for forgiveness and paying compensation in the form of gifts and teaching of non-violence as a prelude to peaceful coexistence.⁵³ In Okrika, male ex-militants constructed boreholes, while the females donated plastic chairs for the Town Hall as reparations.⁵⁴ This reunification program marked a turning point in the relationship between the ex-militants and residents in Okrika, as verified by one respondent: "Now we and the former enemies live together as one, as brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, etc."⁵⁵

Community Development

Implementing development projects in the aftermath of conflict helps build reconciliation and trust between disarmed militants and community members. The federal government, through the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), the Ministry of the Niger Delta, and the Presidential Amnesty Programme, inaugurated several projects throughout the Niger Delta. At the time of this study, their focus was on major capital projects, including the dualization of the East-West highway, as well as land reclamation and a survey for the construction of an Atlantic coastal highway. But these activities have not permeated the local communities in dire need of development, except for the oil and gas sector's stopgap projects which co-opted ex-militants and other non-militant youth for constructing community infrastructure such as roads and repairing oil and gas pipelines.⁵⁶ The latter helped bridge the gap between unemployment, frustration arising from non-payment of stipends, and conflict.

THE CHALLENGES OF THE REINTEGRATION PROCESS: AN ANALYSIS

There is no standard methodology for evaluating the "R" component.⁵⁷ Most

countries measure successful reintegration from a “macro perspective,” while ignoring the “micro-level” performance-oriented assessments. Consequently, most post-conflict countries have experienced a resurgence of conflicts. To avoid this difficulty, the reintegration phase should be evaluated based on micro-level performance because that measurement will help in weighing the macro-level success or failure of the process.

Poorly Organized Economic Assistance

Economic assistance to ex-combatants as they reintegrate into their pre-war society has always been a major cause of concern. Despite the huge budget spent on these programs generally, peace is still unsustainable in the region, due to the poor organization of economic assistance to the target group.

First, the handling of reinsertion allowances is a critical link in the success of the reintegration process.⁵⁸ Unlike the reinsertion process in Uganda, where every ex-combatant was paid equally, irrespective of age, rank, or years of service, in the Niger Delta, ex-warlords took over the payments of stipends to their foot soldiers and disbursed funds in an unfair manner, undermining the efforts of the ex-militants who surrendered their weapons, signed an agreement with the federal government, and registered for demobilization and reintegration. Though the government approved a monthly stipend of N65,000 to ex-militants, warlords paid only between N20,000 and N40,000 to most ex-militants and between N60,000 and N65,000 to other categories. In extreme cases, some registered ex-militants’ names were deleted from the list of registered militants and replaced with new ones (who had never fought in the creeks). Initially, all ex-militants’ stipends were paid to their ex-warlords’ accounts, but after several petitions and protests from the ex-militants, the government decided to pay the ex-militants directly; that system, however, was hijacked by the ex-warlords who believed they had the power to dispense, reduce, or seize allowances at will.⁵⁹ Though the role of the ex-militants was indeed significant in determining the total benefits, payments varied based on the feelings of and loyalty to their warlords. Some ex-militants were paid N30,000 or even less and might not have received equal amounts every month.⁶⁰ In other communities, some ex-militants received N15,000 each. According to one eyewitness:

Anytime they are paying amnesty money at Tombia, go there and you would see people fighting, arguing and shouting at themselves because the money is

divided into half or shared unequally or even the money is not given to them.⁶¹ The 'big boys' (ex-warlords) are always introducing new taxes to cut the money arbitrarily. One boy who was collecting N30,000 in Bukuma fought with them in Tombia, and afterwards, his allowance was increased to N40,000.⁶²

This situation has reduced the prospects for peace due to some ex-militants' disenchantment with the ex-warlord's attitudes. Worsening the prospect further is the failure of the amnesty agency program to pay the 3,642 third-phase ex-militants their stipends, or even to rehabilitate and reintegrate them.⁶³

In addition, there is a huge financial disparity between ex-warlords and their "boys" who faced the dangers of state reprisal attacks in the creeks. Aside from the monthly allowances received by the ex-warlords and the deductions from ex-militants' stipends, a majority of the ex-warlords received contracts worth billions of naira from the federal and state governments as the price for peace, much to the chagrin of ex-militants. For instance, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), signed binding agreements with ex-warlords to the tune of USD39.5m to protect the oil pipelines.⁶⁴ The *Wall Street Journal* captures the new status of ex-warlords in the Niger Delta region in this context:

Some of the leaders took up residence in the executive floors of Abuja's Hilton and through much of 2010 and early 2011, spent weeks or months enjoying the Executive Lounge's complimentary supply of Hennessy V.S.O.P. cognac, priced at N8000 a shot on the room-service menu. Over a buffet of fiery Nigerian dishes—gumbos, jollof rice, pilafs, goat stews—they rubbed shoulders with the country's leading politicians and influence peddlers, who often live on the floor's N100,000-a-night art-deco rooms.⁶⁵

Unfortunately, payments made to ex-warlords have not yielded many positive outcomes. They have neither helped develop their communities generally nor contributed positively towards securing the safety of the waterways. Rather, in recent times, the waterways have seen an increase in violence, oil theft, and illegal oil bunkering. In other words, ex-warlords' protection of the waterways has reinforced opportunities to siphon oil in greater quantities than before. Oil theft has negative implications for crude oil revenues. In 2013, Nigeria lost over 300,000 barrels of crude (equating to losses of USD1.7b per month) to oil theft, pipeline vandalism, and related crimes, under the watchful eyes of ex-warlords-turned-business contractors, hired

by the federal government to protect those waterways.⁶⁶ Consequently, oil companies had to scale back crude oil production and as a result, the gap between actual production and the production forecast for the first quarter of 2013 resulted in a drop in crude oil revenue of about USD1.23b (N191b) that should have accrued to the federation account.⁶⁷ The huge investments of public funds in the safety of oil facilities have not yielded the desired results.

Different categories of financial inequality have created new networks and classes of wealthy elites within the militant groups and, in other cases, strengthened existing patrimonial networks between ex-warlords and ex-militants as a way of guaranteeing regular and full payment of stipends.⁶⁸ But most importantly, it has engendered disenchantment, desperation, frustration, anger, new sources of criminality, and violence in the region.⁶⁹ In fact, many disenchanted ex-militants have resorted to sea piracy, illegal bunkering, and other criminal activities.⁷⁰ For example, Boro was found to be responsible for mobilizing the men who shot and killed twelve policemen on April 5, 2013, at Azuzuama, Bayelsa State. He accused his ex-commander, “General” Kile Torughedi’s (popularly known as The Young Shall Grow) of deducting ex-militants’ monthly stipends at will and sidelining them from the pipeline surveillance contract benefits.⁷¹ Moreover, that incident sent negative signals to other ex-warlords and their families, most of whom ceased visiting their communities for fear of reprisals.⁷² At the time of this research, most of them were wandering the streets, engaged in the sale of hard drugs and petty theft.⁷³

Training Lapses

A major difficulty in the training of ex-militants was the delay or even failure to send some long-rehabilitated ex-militants for training programs, despite the critical importance of training to the region’s security.⁷⁴ According to some ex-militants:

I was part of the first phase (Batch 15) rehabilitated at Obubra camp in 2011. But from then till now, I have not been called for training. At a point, I thought I was the cause. I went to the hospital and screened my blood and found out that I was okay. I had to do it because I heard that persons with health problems are not sent for training. So, I don’t know why I have not been called. I really want to go for training like my friends and learn a vocation. Please, help me. I heard that the program would end very soon. So, what happens to me?⁷⁵

...Basically, I cooked for the men and kept the surrounding in the creeks. I was not the only woman there but we were not up to one hundred women in the bush. But many women are reaping the fruits of what we suffered to gain and we are not benefitting. I suffered in the bush day and night, yet I have nothing to show for it.⁷⁶

Some core ex-militants were excluded from accessing training programs, while unwarranted access to training resources was given to friends and family of amnesty program officials. The situation was worse for ex-militant women whose obligations to take care of their homes impinged on their participation.⁷⁷ These challenges suggest that excluded groups have limited options for survival and that the consequences of neglecting them are detrimental to sustained peace.

The role of corruption in some of the anomalies discussed cannot be over-emphasized.⁷⁸ Corruption has long been known to be a major driver of underdevelopment in Nigeria's Niger Delta region. Studies relate the culture of corruption to the massive oil wealth and popular discontent in the Delta.⁷⁹ Oil wealth spurs corruption, creating a vicious cycle of corruption, patronage, and violence. A study by Augustine Ikelegbe asserted:

The oil economy has not only engendered a lumpen bourgeois class, driven by primitive accumulation, whose only basis is the romance with and compromise by foreign oil companies, but it also engendered intense struggle and contests between those (communities, groups, elites and lumpen bourgeois) that have access to oil benefits (compensation, largess, contracts, and employment given by oil companies) and those that have been marginalized and pauperized.⁸⁰

The convictions of notable Niger Delta governors such as Alamiyeseigha of Bayelsa State and James Ibori of Delta State provided concrete evidence of corruption.⁸¹ Due to their insatiable appetite for public funds, these convicted governors left their states in penury. In spite of the massive revenue allocations to the region (thirteen percent share of oil-generated revenue), the acquisitive character of the state elites resulted in the extreme impoverishment of oil-rich communities.⁸²

Rather than decreasing, the culture of corruption has increased in the amnesty era. As old elites struggle to maintain their gains, a new class of elites has sought its share of excess crude, money that was intended

to be spent on rehabilitating and training ex-militants in the Niger Delta region. To achieve their goals, their offices became pipelines for personal aggrandizement.

Most corrupt activities are perpetrated by amnesty program officials, ex-warlords, and implementing partners, including contractors and consultants who focus on their own enrichment, rather than on successfully benefitting ex-militants. Some of the ways that have been employed to divert the funds involved establishing local and international vocational centers that were neither up to standard nor well-equipped and hiring family members as program managers at such centers.⁸³ They often opt for offshore training because of the greater profits available.⁸⁴ Sometimes they divert beneficiaries from one country to another and replace them with non-militants, withdraw beneficiaries from training programs and divert beneficiaries' benefits to private pockets, or swap core ex-militants for family members and friends.⁸⁵ These operations are protected and sustained by secrecy.⁸⁶

The result of corruption is seen in the diversion of millions of hard foreign currency to the coffers of consultants and contractors, which reduces the funds available to take care of the remaining ex-militants or even existing ones. While the reintegration program is meant for ex-militants, as much as 80 percent of the budget has been given in payments to consultants and contractors, leaving just 20 percent for the rehabilitation of ex-militants.⁸⁷ Since there are no documented or written codes of conduct for the partners' operations, training facilitators, students, contractors, and consultants had the leeway to embezzle funds and go scot-free.⁸⁸ The program is now perceived as a very lucrative business rather than a transformational strategy.

Stanislav Andreski calls those actions "institutionalized robbery of the state by its very custodians."⁸⁹ Due to the government's lax response to corruption and the amnesty program's virtual monopoly of the Niger Delta DDR, the program has had several pitfalls brought on by deceits, tricks, direct and indirect siphoning, and the diversion of amnesty funds.

Lack of Employment Opportunities

One of the criteria for peace in post-war countries is the full empowerment of ex-combatants through the provision of jobs. Research suggests that when ex-combatants fail to find some sort of employment or income-generating

activity, the process of their return to civilian life is often disrupted, and there are high risks of ex-combatants relapsing into criminal and/or aggressive behavior as the cases of Liberia, Central African Republic, and Democratic Republic of the Congo have shown.⁹⁰ Corroborating this argument, other researchers have reported that the major reasons given by Liberian ex-combatants for returning to war were poverty and unemployment among the youth, especially by those who had held jobs before the war.⁹¹

In the Niger Delta region, the inability of those who had received training (especially abroad) to acquire gainful employment has undermined the success of the reintegration process.⁹² Apart from the fact that inability to gain employment after training pushes ex-militants to forget their recently acquired technical skills, it also suggests that such training may be a waste of time and resources. These problems increase the frustrations of the ex-militants and push them back to the creeks.⁹³ This dire situation has been painted by an ex-militant:

Since I came back from the rehabilitation camp in Obubra (Batch 16), I have not gone for training, even those who traveled to Dubai and South Africa returned and we did not see any changes in them because they are like us. Nothing good is happening to them because there is no employment anywhere.⁹⁴

Finding employment for tens of thousands of ex-militants has become a herculean task for a government lacking the capacity to absorb them in a market that is saturated even for qualified graduates.⁹⁵ Another problem is that jobs are mostly located in the oil and gas industry, which is capital-intensive, mostly foreign expertise-based, and therefore, unable to absorb most ex-militants who opt for careers in that industry. Flowing from this is the oil companies' reluctance to absorb ex-militants into their companies despite their "offshore" short-term training skills, owing to the perception that ex-militants are criminals. Consequently, less than two percent of the total number of ex-militants have gained employment in the oil and gas industry. This number represents an insignificant fraction of the total number of ex-militants whose occupations are relevant only within the oil and gas industry. There is a likelihood that the majority of this group will become jobless and poorer in the very near future, raising the possibility of a resurgence of conflicts and increased criminality, with most ex-militants turning towards sea piracy, oil bunkering, and oil theft to sustain themselves and their families.⁹⁶

Lack of Concrete Community Reintegration

The failure to reconcile ex-militants with their communities has not helped the reintegration process, neither has it aided the process of community development. Since reconciliation helps to restore social networks that were lost during conflict, failure to fully implement it in the region has fostered pain and bitterness in victims' minds.

Ex-militants who return to such communities without any form of reconciliation are the object of exacerbated ill-feelings from community members who are still haunted by memories of the violence. These negative memories challenge their co-existence, particularly when the community sees those who perpetrated crimes, being compensated heavily by the state. In Bukuma and Okrika, competition between cult groups has resulted in the loss of lives, vandalism of houses, kidnapping and, raping of young and old women.⁹⁷ In fact, wake-keeps were stopped in Okrika, when it was seen that cult/militant groups were turning them into venues for kidnapping and raping women, brandishing weapons such as knives and clubs.⁹⁸ Rather than working to reconcile these groups, the federal government prioritized the reintegration of ex-militants. The aftermath of this untoward policy contributed to ex-militants' disrespectful attitudes towards community laws and chiefs. Ex-militants eventually took over governance in some communities, such as Peremabiri and Olugbobiri.⁹⁹ The seething but unvoiced anger of many in the communities, bottled up in the interest of peace, endangers present attempts at achieving sustainable peace in the region. Since increasing distrust within communities erodes social capital, violent conflicts with new dimensions could result from the failure to achieve reconciliation among antagonistic groups within the communities.

Exacerbating the failure of community reconciliation is the utter neglect of the oil-rich region which has been affected by deplorable environmental conditions and by militancy.

Now that you are here, take this story out that our people are suffering, both men and women...¹⁰⁰

In the aspect of development, with the implementation of amnesty, we were expecting bulldozers to move into the Niger Delta, but we have not seen anything physical in the form of development. If you travel down to the communities, you will see certain things yourself.¹⁰¹

It is well known that community development in post-conflict societies contributes to peace and progress by facilitating ex-combatants' reintegration within their communities. This can be achieved by providing economic justice through an inclusive approach which benefits both ex-militants and their communities. It is a forward-looking approach and is aimed at the cohesion of the society as a whole.¹⁰²

However, a detailed assessment of development in the Niger Delta communities revealed a wide gap between the reintegration of ex-militants and community development. The conditions of communities at the time of this study seemed tragic when weighed against the level of socio-economic reintegration support for ex-militants. Reintegrating ex-militants without commensurate community development raises huge concerns, in fact, for ex-militants without socio-economic amenities to fall back on in their communities, in terms of job generation and provision of basic needs of life. This situation has also generated concerns for community members who persistently wallow in dire poverty.

In spite of the increase in the federal government's allocations to the NDDC, the Ministry of the Niger Delta, and the states to implement the transformation agenda, poor coordination and political rivalry between agencies; lack of coherence, transparency, and accountability; and poor monitoring have characterized the implementation of those development initiatives. At the time of this study in 2013, there was an almost complete absence of development activities in virtually all the areas visited in the oil-rich communities. Most of their projects had either been abandoned due to the embezzlement of funds or had not received needed maintenance. According to the NNPC 2011 report, about N12.674 trillion was derived in revenues from oil exports with an estimated 2.37 million barrels of crude oil produced daily. In spite of those revenues, development has barely trickled down to the communities that bear the brunt of environmental degradation and political hostilities.¹⁰³

Dilapidated schools, families living in poverty, the need to engage in survival of the fittest, and lack of scholarships have discouraged children from attending school, as most have chosen instead to engage in informal businesses such as fishing, oil bunkering, and other businesses that fetch quick incomes, including trading and prostitution for girls.¹⁰⁴ Communities lack clean drinking water and sanitary conditions, with most of them relying

on water from the river and rivulets for bathing, defecation, refuse, and at the same time for cooking and drinking (without boiling or disinfecting).¹⁰⁵ Reasons given for the absence of pipe-borne water include lack of money to construct boreholes, distance from the river, and competition for space between constructing boreholes and burying the dead, to mention but a few.¹⁰⁶ Most of the communities are denied electricity from the national grid or even from turbines, but they still expect the oil companies to provide generators that would guarantee a supply of electricity.¹⁰⁷ While there are no networks of navigable roads, the sole means of transportation—water transportation—is extremely costly and thus unaffordable for the majority of community residents on a weekly basis.¹⁰⁸ The result is an increase in the cost of living and as a result, a lower standard of living in these communities. The most inhumane aspect of the neglect of communities in the post-amnesty era is the despicable conditions of the health centers, where they are available.¹⁰⁹ Due to the lack of doctors and nurses at such clinics, residents rely on alternative means, that is, the traditional means, or else they travel long distances to the cities to receive formal medical attention. But with the high cost of transportation, delays in the arrival of boats (which sometimes travel only once per day from the communities to the cities) and lack of funds for drugs and other resources that are pertinent to good health, the story is a paradox of excess oil wealth and total community neglect.

These infrastructural deficits in communities not only mark a failure of the development of communities in the Niger Delta region, but they also signify a slow rate in the pace of ex-militants' reintegration into their communities. In short, not only is the reintegration of ex-militants bedeviled by stiff challenges, but community rejuvenation in the oil-rich areas has been totally forgotten and has therefore been a total failure.

CONCLUSION

Reintegration is a long-term process, but under the right circumstances has the capability to transform societies. However, the failure of the federal government to engage in all aspects of reintegration has created pitfalls in its implementation. What are the lessons that can be applied for success with future programs?

In terms of implementation, the federal government has been selective in its approach to the process by concentrating on reintegration measures for individual ex-militants, which is only a short-term strategy for managing

the crisis. While focusing on ex-militants could help forestall insecurity and dangers inherent in neglecting them, given their access to weaponry, the neglect of the communities to which the ex-militants were returning, as a long-term process towards achieving peace and sustaining development, undermined the success of the whole program. Even within the individual reintegration process, several lapses were identified, including selective rehabilitation and training of ex-militants; problems with the payment of stipends; corruption in the implementation of training programs involving ex-warlords, amnesty program officials, and contractors/consultants. This resulted in inadequate funding of programs for the ex-militants while the implementers basked in sudden wealth, leading to the ex-militants' frustration and anger. According to Nigerian academic Ibaba S. Ibaba, "The government has only succeeded in mopping the floor when the roof is leaking instead of repairing the leaking roof. So, it is just a waste of money and resources." These are issues that could lead to a resurgence of violence in the immediate future.¹¹⁰

What are the lessons learned from the implementation of the reintegration process? First, the government's lack of sincere interest, focus, and commitment has resulted in the denial of ex-militants' stipends. Inadequate funding and extensive misappropriation and embezzlement of available funds are the basis for the failed reintegration of ex-militants. During fieldwork, disgruntled ex-militants threatened to return to the creeks and resume violence.¹¹¹

Second, the selectivity pursued in the Niger Delta region between individual and community types of reintegration cannot engender sustainable peace, security, and development in the region. Third, when inexperienced actors are employed to execute amnesty projects of such magnitude, these projects will always be characterized by lopsided outcomes, and if these are not quickly addressed, they could result in cycles of conflicts.

Based on this analysis, a few recommendations for the meaningful transformation of the region can be proffered. First, a total review of the whole program must be carried out to weigh successes against challenges embedded in the program. The review should underscore the underlying structural issues that engender frustration, anger, and hostilities. It must be comprehensive and engage all the stakeholders in the region, without sidelining any group. It should set also realistic, achievable benchmarks.

Second, the government should take urgent steps to train other core ex-militants who were sidelined in the first, second, and third phases of the program. Names of rehabilitated but untrained ex-militants should be gathered, and reputable training sites should be identified for them within Nigeria. Training must be realistic, executed by experts, and tailored to fit the labor market in their region (outside the oil and gas industry) to offer the potential for a sustainable livelihood.

Third, sustainable employment is the sine qua non for peace and development; guaranteed jobs would prevent youths from becoming violent instruments manipulated by politicians, groups, or patrimonial networks. There should be a strong focus on employment opportunities for female ex-militants. Apart from raising gender awareness in communities, this approach would go a long way toward improving overall standards of living while reducing participation in occupations such as prostitution. Lastly, since ex-militants have been trained to use a variety of sophisticated weapons, the government should engage some of them in the military forces in ways to help divert energies to productive activities and put their expertise to better use.

Fourth, it is clear from the Niger Delta case that ex-militants may not become catalysts for development within their communities. Rather, community-level interventions should be critically pursued along with the provision of extensive infrastructural development to benefit both the ex-militants and their communities, especially in riverine communities. Ex-militants should not be perceived as a special group, but be included as an important group in community-based development programs, including the reconstruction of destroyed social infrastructure. This approach will reduce the poverty and frustration associated with prioritizing the reintegration of ex-militants, and increase social capital, ultimately, leading to peace and stability.

In this case, local context and input should be given high consideration. Communities should participate in the planning and execution process of the policies that affect them. This will bring about needed commitment, proper monitoring, evaluation, and a guarantee of desired outcomes. Local content should engender participation and equity across gender and class. Furthermore, civil society should work hand-in-hand with the communities as much as possible while helping to strengthen their efforts and to project their positive images internationally.

Fifth, the government should engage in total community reconciliation in

an all-embracing manner that will create social capital among the various groups.

Sixth, the government should invest heavily in industry-building tailored to the needs of communities. Since the Niger Delta is the largest rice cultivation area in the sub-region, the government could establish a rice production company in Peremabiri, not just to benefit Niger Deltans or even Nigeria as a whole, but to export to all parts of West Africa. The palm oil sector could become fully industrialized, and the fishing industry could be improved to become part of a large export economy for the region. Moreover, abandoned companies such as Daewoo Company should be revitalized and youths in the region trained to take up employment there. These measures could have the capacity to employ most ex-militants as well as non-militants in the region.

Seventh, the oil and gas industry must be held accountable for its corporate social responsibility. Oil spills linked to faulty pipelines or exploration activities must be fully cleaned, and compensation paid directly to victims without any diversion of funds. Strict policies ensuring an end to gas flaring should be instituted, while companies diverting the flares to domestic uses and as electricity should be encouraged to invest in the Niger Delta region. International regulatory frameworks should be adopted by the federal government and strictly implemented to stop pollution and gas flaring.

In addition, corrupt amnesty officials should be prosecuted. Political commitment, transparency, accountability, and absence of corrupt activities within the amnesty fold are the watchwords for a successful reintegration project in the Niger Delta region.

Finally, “peace agreements...do not in themselves end wars or bring about lasting peace...”.¹¹² Because half of all peace accords fail within the first five years (conflict trap), pre-war conditions need to be addressed to prevent recurrences of conflict. Such conditions should be sought in the trajectory of post-colonial politics in Nigeria, embracing the contradictions between democracy, development, and globalization, in the context of environmental and security implications and repercussions of oil exploration.¹¹³ In the final analysis, methods should be sought through a multi-sectoral approach. The only way to guarantee successful reintegration and healing within the communities is to make sure that all involved parties have ownership and a stake in success. From state agencies, down to individual community

members, peacebuilding requires collective commitment if it is to be successful.

NOTES

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44. Interviews with consultants on August 22 and August 23, 2011, as well as with some ex-militants and residents in Peremabiri, Olugbobiri, Bukuma, and Bakana, from January to March, 2013.
45. General Joshua, an indigene of Olugbobiri who got a state contract to dredge waterways, employed some of his 'boys' as a way for them to earn a living. In FGD discussion with some ex-militants, Charles, Dennis, Cally, and Moses in Olugbobiri, Bayelsa State, March 19, 2013; Interview with the Peremabiri Youth Vice-Chairman, Mr. Toby on March 5, 2013 in Peremabiri, Bayelsa State; Interviews with Siri (ex-militant, Peremabiri CDC Secretary, and a school teacher) and Idowu (core militant) in Peremabiri, Bayelsa State, on March 11, 2013 and Sam Charles (ex-militant) in Olugbobiri, March 22, 2013.
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Okrika, January 19, 2013.

53. Interview with Community Development Committee Chairmen, namely, James Ugbokiri, and Shedrack Ojiki in Okrika on January 15 and 16, 2013 respectively.
54. Interview with Mr. Shedrack Ojiki, a Community Development Community (CDC) chairman, Olugbiri, Okrika, January 16, 2013.
55. Interview with Mr. Tamuno Ernest at African Trading Company (ATC) Community, Okrika, 19 January 2013 and reiterated by Ugbokiri, Shedrack, and Erakpo.
56. Interview with Toby, the Vice President of the Peremabiri Youth group, March 5, 2013.
57. Julia Buxton, "Reintegration and long-term development: Linkages and challenges." Thematic Working Paper 5 (Bradford: University of Bradford, 2008): 3
58. Interviews with ex-militants across the four communities visited by author.
59. Interview with Osime Jackson in Okrika, Rivers State, and FGD with Commander Solo and Japan Sokoteme in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. Commander Solo's boss, General Ab, removed his name from the list of payees because he heard from a rumor mill that Commander Solo was threatening to kill him.
60. Interview with S. David in Peremabiri, March 11, 2013. Most interviewees agreed that Ogun Boss seized all ex-combatants' banks passbooks, thereby preventing them from handling their own accounts. He paid them N20,000 and none could complain for fear of being killed or harassed by his gunmen. The story was the same in all studied communities.
61. Tombia is the headquarters for the payment of stipends since it is the home of Farah Dagogo, a militant warlord in Tombia, Rivers State.
62. Interview with Edwin, a Bukuma resident, February 11, 2013.
63. The third phase disarmed in October, 2012 in Bayelsa State.
64. Afolabi Ogunde, "NNPC Awards Niger Delta Militants Billions in Security Contracts," *Business News*, August 23, 2012.
65. Drew Hinshaw, "Nigeria's Former Oil Bandits Now Collect Government Cash," *Wall Street Journal* (New York, NY), August 19, 2012.
66. Edegbe Odemwingie and Jonathan Nda-Isaiah, "Nigeria Loses 400,000 Barrels Daily to Crude Oil Theft," *Leadership*, (November 14, 2013): 9; R. Okere, "Curtailing Oil Theft, Illegal Bunkering via Legislation," *The Guardian* (Nigeria), August 21, 2013; and

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67. Dennis Mernyi, "Crude Oil Theft, Pipeline Vandalism Cross Over to 2014," *The Sun*, January 1, 2014.
 68. Edegbe Odemwingie, "Budget 2013: N36bn Ex-Militant's Largesse in Review." *Leadership* (Nigeria), November 27, 2012 (accessed on January 23, 2014).
 69. FGD with Ekine, Adokiye, Daniel in Bukuma, February 11, 2013.
 70. Commander Solo's statement during FGD in Yenagoa, April 2, 2013, and interview with Inifa Joshua, Bukuma Youth Group Secretary, February 11, 2013.
 71. Mike Odiegwu, Fidelis Soriwei, Jude Onwuamanam, and Adelani Adepegba, "Gunmen Kill 12 Policemen in Bayelsa," *Nigeria Best Forum News*, April 17, 2012.
 72. Interview with Dr. Etekpe, Political Science and Administration Department, Niger Delta University (NDU), Wilberforce Island, Amassoma, Bayelsa State, December 13, 2012.
 73. FGD with some of the third-phase members, namely, General Parker, General Godbless Ozonto and General Andrew in Yenagoa, December 15, 2012.
 74. Interview with AB in Ogbia, Bayelsa State, April 4, 2013.
 75. Interview with Sam, an ex-militant in Olugbobiri, Bayelsa State, March 10, 2013.
 76. Interview with Jennifer Williams in Okrika, February 4, 2013.
 77. Interview with Bara in FGD with ex-female militants in Okrika, February 4, 2013.
 78. Interviews and FGDs with victims of alienation and dismissal from the training programs reiterated this assertion.
 79. Terry Lynn Karl, *The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petro-States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Daniel Jordan Smith, *A Culture of Corruption: Everyday Deception and Popular Discontent in Nigeria*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007; Welch, Claude E., "The Ogoni and Self-Determination: Increasing violence in Nigeria," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 33, No. 2 (1995): 636.
 80. Augustine Ikelegbe, "Encounter of Insurgent Youth Associations with the States in the Oil Rich Niger Delta Region of Nigeria," *Journal of Global South Studies* 22, No. 1 (2005): 3.

81. David. U. Enweremadu, "Ending the Vicious Circle: Oil, corruption and violent conflict in the Niger Delta," (paper presented at the Conference on "Violence and Conflict in West Africa," organized by IFRA, Nigeria, at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 2009), 12.
82. Terry Lynn Karl, *The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petro-States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
83. Interviews and FGDs with victims of alienation and dismissal from the training programs repeated this assertion.
84. Interview with Mr. Lewisham, Amnesty International member in Port Harcourt, on September 2, 2011.
85. Focus Group Discussions with General Solo, Japan, and General Parker on December 15, 2013.
86. Efforts to interview some ex-militant trainees at their centers in Port Harcourt and Lagos in 2013 proved abortive.
87. Oluwatoyin O. Oluwaniyi, "Women's Protests in the Niger Delta Region," in *Oil and Insurgency in the Niger Delta: Managing the Complex Politics of Petro-Violence*, eds. Cyril Obi and Siri Aas Rustad (London: Zed Books) 2011: 150–66.
88. Experience of Agnes, Dede's daughter at Westlanto Company, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
89. Stanislaw Andreski, *Parasitism and Subversion: The Case of Latin America* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1966): 62–65.
90. Anders Nilsson, *Reintegrating Ex-Combatants in Post-Conflict Societies* (Stockholm: SIDA-Combatants, 2005): 43.
91. Richard Hill, Gwendolyn Taylor, and Jonathan Temin, "Would you Fight Again? Understanding Liberian Ex-Combatants' Reintegration," United States Institute of Peace: Special Report No. 211, September 2008.
92. Statement by Japan Soketeme in FGD, March 13, 2013.
93. Interview with Mr. Lucky in Olugbobiri, March 8, 2013.
94. Interview with Osime Jackson, ex-militant, Okrika, January 17, 2013.
95. Interview with Dr. Etekpe, Bayelsa State, December 13, 2012.

96. Bassey Udo, "Next Phase of Militancy Will be Tough, Niger Delta Youth Warns Nigeria, Oil Companies," *Premium Times*, February 21, 2013.
97. Interview with Inifa, Secretary of Bukuma Youth Group, Bukuma, February 11, 2013.
98. Interview with sub-Chief Nakan (JP), Okrika, January 15, 2013.
99. In Peremabiri and Olugbobiri, chiefs were totally sidelined and sometimes threatened by some ex-militants.
100. Statement by Chief Karigbo in FGD, representing other chiefs in Peremabiri and Niger Delta communities, Peremabiri, March 5, 2013.
101. Interview with Dennis Okilo, IYC Secretary, Central Zone, Bayelsa State, March 30, 2013.
102. Tobie Aurelien and François Masabo, *Healing Fractured Lives: Reconciliation and Reintegration in Rwanda* (London: International Alert, 2012).
103. Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, *Draft Annual Statistical Bulletin* (Abuja: NNPC, 2011).
104. Interview with two lady corporers, teachers in the Senior Secondary School, Peremabiri, March 6, 2013.
105. One of my local contacts in Olugbobiri drank the dirty river water freely, saying she had been drinking it since birth and therefore her body was immune to it. She referred to it as safest water.
106. Interview with Chief Kosini and supported by Chief Azulu and some youth members in focus group discussions in Olugbobiri, March 7, 2013.
107. Interview with the Bakana Community Development Association (BCDA), Financial Secretary, Apostle Abioton Allison in Bakana, Rivers State, February 14, 2013.
108. From author's experience, a trip to and from Peremabiri and Yenagoa is approximately one hour and fifteen minutes by speedboat, with a cost ranging between N1,500 and N2,000. But transport fare from Yenagoa to Olugbobiri, a trip of about one hour and forty-five minutes, cost between N2,500 and N3,000.
109. Interviews with residents in Peremabiri and Olugbobiri, March 2013.
110. Interview with Dr. Ibaba at the Bayelsa State University, Wilberforce, Amassoma, February 17, 2013.

111. Two rival cult groups confronted each other in Omoku, Rivers State, resulting in the deaths of twenty people on 9 January 2015.
112. David J. Francis, "Tortuous Path to Peace: The Lome Accord and postwar peacebuilding in Sierra Leone," *Security Dialogue* 31, No. 3 (2000): 357.
113. Sofiri Joab-Peterside, "State and Fallacy of Rehabilitation of 'Repentant Militants' in Nigeria's Niger Delta: Analysis of first phase of the federal government's amnesty programme," *Pan African Social Science Review* 11 (2010): 69.

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