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VANGUARD

Nigeria: Agip Security Personnel Kill Four

Dayo Johnson

13 April 2009

TENSION rose in the Oil Producing Communities of Ondo State weekend over the alleged killing of four fishermen by security operatives attached to Nigerian Agip Exploration Oil Company (AGIP) operating in the Atlantic Coast of the state.

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Consequently, the fishermen under the auspices of the Ilaje Fishermen Association and Association of Ilaje Coastal Fishermen have petitioned the Presidency and the National Security Adviser to the President over the gruesome killing of four of the 16 protesting fishermen who visited the platform weekend to submit letter to the oil company.

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Briefing newsmen on the development in the communities, the chairmen of the fishermen associations, Apostle Lemomu Lawrence and Chief Benjamin Meyo Abiodun gave the names of those killed to include Erukusi Goddey, Orisamakin Akin, Mesogborinwon Olumide and Oyo Samuel.

According to their counsel, Prince Idowu Mafimisebi, the fishermen alleged that they had written several letters to the oil giant requesting for assistant without any reply.

He pointed out that some of the negative effects of oil exploration in the areas included low cash, inability to fish in shallow water, sea incursion and water pollution.

Mafimisebi said that it was when the letters did not get the desired attention that the fishermen decided to visit the platform of the company located at the Atlantic Coast of the state to drop the letter of protest themselves.

He pointed out that the security operatives on sighting the fishermen at the Abo oil field, opened fire and four of those that visited the platform died instantly.

According to him "the innocent fishermen who had hitherto informed the Nigerian Navy, the Army, the Police and the State Security Service of their intention to visit AGIP platform to physically deliver their said mail, AGIP ordered their security men to open fire on the fishermen to the extent of blowing up one of their boats."

Mafimisebi said that since the incident they have not seen the corpse of the four fishermen that were killed by the security operatives attached to the Abo oil platform.

But the fishermen said they were ready to disrupt the activities of the oil company if their demands to produce the men whose boat was sunk and the need to negotiate with them were not met.

They said that all the oil companies prospecting oil in the Ilaje territories except AGIP always give incentives directly to the fishermen since their activities affect fishing activities.

Mafimisebi added that the company has written to meet with the oil producing communities through their representatives tomorrow at their Lagos office saying the meeting would determine the relationship between the company and the communities.

He said that exploration activities of the oil company had made fishing much more difficult for the fishermen as they could no longer fish in the shallow

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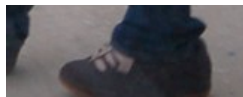
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waters due to the pipelines and pollution.

The counsel pointed out that the activities of the company had also exposed the communities to sea incursion and other environmental degradation.

"The four men missing must be produced alive. Although we are not out for war but what Agip has done will lead to serious hostilities between it and the host communities."

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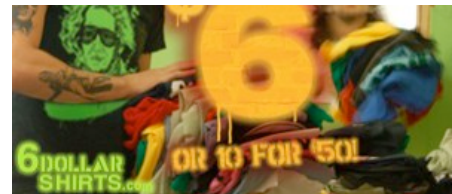
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