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## 11 KILLED, SCORES MISSING IN OGONI

### \* As Fresh Crisis Erupts Over Oil Firm

FIFTEEN years after the Ogoni crisis which claimed the lives of Ken Saro-Wiwa, and eight of his kinsmen in 1995, following their 1993 uprising, that axis of Rivers State, is gradually cycling back to violence. Already, 11 persons are so far feared killed, and scores missing as armed youths suspected to be acting for a major transnational oil company, have unleashing mayhem in the area.

The Ogoni, mass movement, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) is openly accusing the Anglo-Dutch super oil and gas major, Shell, for allegedly being behind the renewed bloodletting in the largely rustic Ogoni communities.

The irate Ogoni youths are said to be members of "Community and Shell Togetherness (CAST)".

MOSOP's Information Officer, Bari-ara Kpalap, says members of the group are known militants already declared wanted by the police for multiple murder incidents, kidnapping and gun-running.

The armed Ogoni youths allegedly unleashed mayhem on Kegbara Dere at about 4pm on Tuesday, February 17, 2009 killing one Burabari Friday Paago, and four others whose identities were not immediately known in cold blood.

At the moment, the whereabouts of dozens of community persons are unknown. Among the missing persons are Barivure Kuru, Ledisi Siitu, Paul Nbaabura and Beate Sunday, who were said to have sustained serious gun shot wounds.

CAST was allegedly formed by Shell in 2006 to silence any perceived opposition to its interests in Ogoni.

MOSOP however, gave the names of the arrowheads of the renewed uprising as Ledee Clinton Zormaol, Batom Namon, Tombari Kuru, Babarina-or Deelo, Victor Dokara, Monday Sunday Popkoo and Bariara Zormaa Tooto.

They allegedly led some 70 other armed youths to shoot indiscriminately into the air and targeting perceived enemies of the oil company in the community. "On February 10, the gang had in similar fashion raided the homes of perceived opponents of the oil major in the community. About five victims including Chief Zorgbaa Taoh were violently attacked and killed whilst a deep machete cut was inflicted on the left knee of Mr. Bari-npop Atedi Bealo and was treated at Dumkil, a local clinic at Kpor, headquarters of Gokana Local Government Council", MOSOP said.

Several women including Mrs. Nmaa Nkua and Madam Leemabari Kpenu, member and Secretary, Kegbara Dere Women's Associations (KEDWA) respectively were allegedly raped and tortured.

Continuing, MOSOP said, "the family house of our president, Mr. Ledum Mitee, was vandalized. Other damaged houses include those of Messrs. Clement Badom, Pene Gianen and Chief Miiibekee Deetogo. The only offence of the victims is the perception that they are opponents of Shell whose script is being acted. Although the incidents aforesaid have been reported to the security apparatus in the area and beyond, none of the culprits has been arrested".

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Adding, the Ogoni group said, "we consider the unprovoked but influenced violence and killings in the community since September 9, 2008 as gravely appalling. Similarly, we are deeply outraged at reports indicating that Shell hired helicopters had several times flown over Kegbara Dere at unusual and concerned levels and immediately after, the outlaws struck, suggesting that it was providing surveillance cover in aid of the attackers".

"This is regrettably reminiscent of past similar patterns where the same approach was adopted prior to attacks on Ogoni by induced neighbouring communities and the infamous Rivers State Internal Security Task Force (RSISTF) that occupied Ogoni at the pick of repression in the region", MOSOP said.

According to them, "we are pained that since 1993, the Ogoni people have been at the receiving end due to Shell's barbaric and bloody responses to our legitimate campaign for justice. This callous corporate behaviour is not only inhuman but betrayed hate, which will not be tolerated by our people. We are aware of plots by the oil mogul to destabilize Kegbara Dere, one of the strong holds of MOSOP to actualize that exposed understanding with the Federal Government that silently pairs it with NNPC to extract oil in Ogoni.

"MOSOP would warn Shell to leave Ogoni alone since its social license with the people has collapsed irredeemably occasioning the death of the relationship as no amount of sponsored murderous activities would sway our resolve otherwise.

"We would like to advice the lawless gang terrorizing, killing and making life difficult for the people of Kegbara Dere to realize that the ultimate aim of Shell is to destroy the community and not to improve their lot and hence should stop the carnage now. Ogoni youths we must warn must recognize that the challenge of injustice inflicted on us by Shell and government is enormous and requires concerted effort built on internal cohesion and unity of purpose if we must defeat the oppressors and pull out of our disadvantaged circumstances.

"Mortgaging your conscience for peanuts against the collective interest of the people would only earn you perpetual slavery and death. We must thus inform that the Ogoni people would not tolerate any more violence and related acts that not only impose excruciating agony on us but also tarnish our hard earned reputation".

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In the mean time, MOSOP is calling on the security forces in the area to leave no stone unturned in their efforts to apprehend and bring the perpetrators and their sponsors to justice. "We are also calling on the Rivers State Government to as matter of urgency station a combined team of soldiers and mobile police men in Kegbara Dere to return peace to the community. This is the time for government and the security forces to show that they care", they added.

Efforts to get the Commissioner of Police, Rivers State command, Mr. Bala Hassan, for comments did not pay off, as a male voice on his cell phone told our correspondent, "right now, the commissioner is not around. He is in a meeting with the Inspector General of Police in Ibadan".

Similarly, the Spokesperson for the command, Mrs. Rita Inoma-Abbey, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) was said to be "too busy" to attend to our correspondent as at 10.52AM yesterday.

Meanwhile, there is an air of uncertainty in Ogoni at the moment as no one knows what will happen next. Shell officials in Port Harcourt who said they were not competent to comment on the allegation against the company, said their appropriate authority in their Lagos office would respond to the issue.

A concerned company official who did not want his name in print, however, told our correspondent, "i am not convinced that Shell will do what MOSOP is claiming. It is not true, Shell is certainly not responsible for the vioplene in Ogoni".

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