

# What The **MILITANTS** **SAY**

**OUTCOMES OF  
THE PRESIDENTIAL  
AMNESTY PROGRAMME  
(PAP) IN OIL RICH  
NIGER DELTA**

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August 2020



## Acknowledgement

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The Niger Delta Dialogue (NDD) expresses gratitude to all participants in this study, especially ex-agitators and their leaders. The fieldwork for this study was carried out by the following persons: Nwaobi Austine Nwaze (Cross River State), Sam Osung (Akwa Ibom), Livingstone Membre (Rivers State), Stephen Iyama (Rivers State), Chief Lucky Duumaa (Rivers State), Tokpo Coronation (Bayelsa State), Utavie Jeremiah Wellington (Bayelsa State), Tega Edeki (Delta State), Elizabeth Jarikre (Delta State), Ken Omavuyenor (Delta State), Emmanuel Etim (Ondo State/Abuja), and Dr. Iro Aghedo (Edo State). Fieldwork was supervised by Dr. Judith Burdin Asuni and Ambassador Nkoyo Toyo of the Niger Delta Dialogue (NDD). The NDD acknowledges Chief Ani Esin for facilitating fieldwork in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States.

## Executive Summary

This study sets out to analyze the outcome of Nigeria's Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) for armed groups in the oil rich Niger Delta region. The PAP was introduced in 2009 following the proclamation of amnesty for militants belonging to armed groups in the Niger Delta by the late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua. The PAP was designed and implemented as a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme. The PAP was meant to be among a collection of intervention strategies recommended by committees established by the Federal Government to find lasting solutions to the crisis in the Niger Delta. This study exclusively focused on the views of ex-militants in explaining the implementation and outcomes of Nigeria's PAP in the Niger Delta.

The PAP was designed to facilitate the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of amnestied ex-militants in the Niger Delta. Following its proclamation, about 30, 000 ex-militants were reported to have accepted the amnesty in three different phases. The PAP trained ex-militants in various vocational and educational subjects in the Niger Delta and abroad. This training was designed to facilitate the reintegration of ex-militants into communities and enable them lead meaningful lives as civilians. The training began in 2010.

This study finds that the continuous implementation of the Niger Delta PAP has sustained the cessation of hostilities in the Niger Delta. However, the views of ex-militants show that there are serious challenges that have

made it difficult for the programme to achieve the overarching objective of the reintegration of ex-militants in Niger Delta communities. The study shows that the vocational education provided for most ex-militants has been inadequate and did not prepare them for work in private sector in the region. There was no market study to understand the demand for labour or opportunities in the Niger Delta prior to the design and implementation of the reintegration programme. This has left many ex-militants with no other option than to depend on the monthly stipends paid by the Nigerian government. The failure to achieve this economic reintegration objective for most ex-militants partly explains why after ten years of implementation, the Nigerian government is unable to end the PAP.

The study also finds that relationship between ex-militants and other members of their communities has moved from conflict to cooperation and fear and respect. Ex-militants have been taken up active social and political roles in their communities since accepting amnesty. Some ex-militants have been elected into state positions such as State House of Assembly and National House of Representatives. Others have been appointed into executive positions at the state and local government levels. Some others occupy positions of authority in their communities as traditional rulers, chiefs and chairmen of Community Development Committees (CDC). Youthful ex-militants have played security roles, such as vigilante members, in service of their communities. In particular cases, prominent ex-militant leaders such as Government Ekpemupolo (Tompolo) have set up a foundation to cater for the community development projects and education of students from their communities. Overall, the study finds that ex-militants are active within their communities. However, it is unclear

whether their relationship with other members of communities is shaped by fear, respect or mutual acceptance.

The study concludes that there is an urgent need for the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) to reform the PAP to enable it to achieve its objective of reintegrating ex-militants in the Niger Delta. To achieve this, the study makes the following overarching recommendations:

**- There is an urgent need for a verification of the number of ex-militants registered in the amnesty programme.**

As part of efforts to address the shortcomings of the programme, it is important that the government conduct a verification exercise to confirm the actual number of people that are registered in the programme.

**- An assessment of the competence of ex-militants trained in the amnesty programme.**

The PAP should conduct an assessment of the capacities of ex-militants trained through the programme. This assessment should aim to address the capacity gaps that may exist as a result of poor or incomplete training.

**- Niger Delta Labour Market Assessment**

PAP should conduct a labour market assessment in the Niger Delta. This assessment should aim to understand the demand side of the labour market for both the formal and informal sectors of the economy. The outcome of the assessment

should be used to design an economic reintegration programme for ex-militants that are still in need of jobs.

**- Decentralisation and reform of the PAP**

The Federal Government of Nigeria should start a decentralization process for the PAP. This process should aim to transfer control of the amnesty programme to the local level where ex-militants reside. This is because this is the area where reintegration is expected to take place. This process should aim to add new elements or strengthen existing elements that will address current challenges of the amnesty programme to produce the intended outcomes.

**- Community Reconciliation and Local Peacebuilding**

The PAP should revisit the issue of community reconciliation and local peacebuilding in communities across the Niger Delta. This is needed to address hidden grievances held against ex-militants and improve social cohesion in communities.

**- Strategic Communication**

It is essential that government gives accurate and timely information to the people of the Niger Delta. Government should call the leaders of the region – the traditional rulers, ethnic leaders, women, mainstream youth and ex-agitator leaders – to discuss and find solutions together.

## Introduction

From the early 2000s, Nigeria's oil rich Niger Delta region experienced armed militant insurgency. The insurgency was a part of activities carried out by ethnic militant groups to advocate for development in impoverished oil producing communities in the Niger Delta region (Ukiwo, 2005; Ebiede, 2017; Watts, 2005). Although agitations for development in these communities predated Nigeria's independence from Great Britain in 1960,<sup>1</sup> the introduction of armed militant tactics in the early 2000s was relatively new (Ibaba, 2011).<sup>2</sup> The protests of armed agitators in the Niger Delta were based on demands that are linked to the poor environmental, infrastructural and human development indicators in the Niger Delta (Obi, 2010; Ebiede, 2011). These poor indicators are directly linked to the production of oil, the main source of public revenues in Nigeria, in the Niger Delta region. Oil production has led to environmental pollution that has destroyed the flora and fauna in the area and reduced the livability of the region for the local people.

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<sup>1</sup> This is extensively documented in various reports dating back to Willink, Henry, ed. *Nigeria: Report of the Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Fears of Minorities and the Means of Allaying Them*. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1958.

<sup>2</sup> Adaka Boro started with armed militancy. But changed as a result of the civil war. Ken Saro Wiwa inspired a nonviolent movement. Interethnic armed conflicts and militarization of the Niger Delta contributed to armed militant tactics adopted by youth groups in the region.

<sup>3</sup> DSP Alamiyeseigha, then Governor of Bayelsa State, was arrested in London by Police in the United Kingdom (UK) for money laundering charges. He returned to Nigeria without authorization from

Major infrastructural projects, such as seaports and roads, that could facilitate economic growth and improved living conditions for the people of the region are lacking. Where they exist, they have been dilapidated and function at very low capacity. Prior to the outbreak of militancy, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) showed that 70% of people in the region lived below the poverty line. The arguments of groups in the region are that the production of crude oil has impoverished the people of the region, while contributing at least 70% of public revenues for the different levels of government in Nigeria. It is within this context that militant youth groups emerged to demand for the control of oil resources by oil producing communities in the Niger Delta region.

Militant activities targeted oil industry infrastructure and expatriates. Beginning from 2003, expatriate oil workers in the Niger Delta were routinely kidnapped by militant groups in the Niger Delta. Kidnaps were often followed up with demands for resource control and the release of prominent Niger Deltans, such as the late Chief DSP Alamiyeseigha<sup>3</sup> and Asari Dokubo<sup>4</sup>, from detention. Equally, militants attacked oil industry infrastructure such as oil transport pipelines, rigs, and flow stations (Ibaba, 2011).

authorities in the UK. He was subsequently impeached by the Bayelsa State House of Assembly in controversial circumstances. He was arrested by Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) following his impeachment. Among the Ijaws in the Niger Delta, DSP Alamiyeseigha's impeachment and arrest are deemed to be politically motivated. The Ijaw National Congress (INC) claims that he was not given a fair hearing. This view is widely held across Ijaws in the Niger Delta.

<sup>4</sup> Asari Dokubo was arrested by Nigeria's Federal Government and charged for treason. His arrest was as a result of participation in the armed struggle in the Niger Delta. He was a leader of the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) as at the time of his arrest.

Several groups emerged following the outbreak of militancy. Most prominent among them was the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). Other major groups included the Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV), Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), and Niger Delta Strike Force (NDSF). Several other splinter and minor armed groups existed alongside these major groups. Research shows that while these groups evolved out of protests in the Niger Delta, they have roots in other forms of youth gangs and ethnic militias in the Niger Delta. For example, the leaders of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in Gbaramatu and Warri areas of Delta State were linked to the Federation of Niger Delta Ijaw Communities (FNDIC). FNDIC was the main platform that mobilized the Ijaws in the conflict with the Itsekiri ethnic group during disputes over the proposed location of Warri South West Local Government Headquarters (Asuni, 2009). In other communities, youth who had previously participated in intra-communal conflicts or other forms of violence took advantage of the tide of protests to create factions of major militant groups such as MEND, NDPVF and NDV in their communities where they themselves became leaders of such groups (Ebiede, 2017b).

By 2007, the Niger Delta, especially its creeks and riverine areas, had become a theatre of violence with everyday occurrence of militant attacks and counter-attacks by the Nigerian military. This period which coincided with the end of President Olusegun Obasanjo's two terms in office, was also a transition period into President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's government. Hence, the Niger Delta became a topical issue during the electioneering and transition period. The outgoing government of President Obasanjo extended political patronage to the

Niger Delta, including the nomination of Goodluck Jonathan, an ethnic Ijaw from Bayelsa State in central Niger Delta, as Vice Presidential running mate to Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, an ethnic Fulani from Katsina State. The incoming government of President Yar'Adua made the Niger Delta one of its cardinal Seven Point Agenda and created the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs upon assumption of office in 2007.

Beyond the creation of the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, the President Yar'Adua administration initiated a 'peace process' with different actors in the Niger Delta, especially the armed militant groups in the region. In 2007, President Yar'Adua constituted the Niger Delta Peace and Conflict Resolution Committee (NDPCRC) led by David Brigidi, a former senator and politician from Bayelsa State. One year later, Yar'Adua's government inaugurated the Niger Delta Technical Committee (NDTC) led by Ledum Mitee, an Ogoni Human Rights Activist and Lawyer. The Brigidi Committee engaged in negotiations with armed groups, with the objective of reducing violence that targeted oil industry infrastructure and ending armed agitations. The Mitee committee was charged with reviewing all existing reports about the Niger Delta and make recommendations to the Federal Government on how to address the challenges in the region. The Ledum Mitee committee produced the Niger Delta Technical Committee report in November 2008 with the following key recommendations:

- An increase of derivation from the present 13 percent to 25 percent and dedication of additional revenues largely to new infrastructure and sustainable development of the region;

- Open trial and bail for accused militant Henry Okah;
- Completion of the East West Road with spurs to the coast;
- Payment of outstanding statutory funds owed to the NDDC;
- Disarmament process for youths involved in militancy through a credible decommission, disarmament and rehabilitation (DDR) process;
- Establishment of a Youth Employment Scheme (YES) that would employ at least 2,000 Youth in each local Government area of the Niger Delta States (Kuku 2012)

The recommendations of the Ledum Mittee Committee were well received by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) under President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua. Following extensive consultations and buy-in from stakeholders in the Niger Delta, the Federal Government announced a presidential proclamation offering amnesty to armed militants in the Niger Delta on 25 June 2009. In his announcement, President Yar'Adua proclaimed that:

*I hereby grant amnesty and unconditional pardon to all persons who have directly or indirectly participated in the commission of offences associated with militant activities in the Niger Delta. The pardon shall take effect upon the surrender and handing over of all equipment, weapons, arms and ammunition and execution of the renunciation of militancy*

*forms specified in the schedule hereto, by the affected persons at the nearest collection centre established for the purpose by government in each of the Niger Delta States. The unconditional pardon granted pursuant to this proclamation shall extend to all persons presently being prosecuted for offences associated with militant activities.*

This proclamation was operationalized by the appointment of a Seven Man Presidential Amnesty Committee (PAC). The PAC was mandated to design a policy to manage the transition of amnestied militants from armed groups into society as civilians. In peacebuilding jargon, the PAC was mandated to design a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme for armed militants in the Niger Delta. Key Actors in the Niger Delta argue that the negotiations leading to the Presidential Amnesty were made up of three dimensions: *the development of the Niger Delta region, transfer of equities in oil licenses to oil producing communities and the implementation of a DDR programme for armed militants.*<sup>5</sup> These claims are true to the extent that these are issues that were included in the recommendations of the Ledum Mitee Committee. However, what is known and what has been implemented as the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) has mainly been the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of amnestied militants in Nigeria's Niger Delta region.

Upon proclamation, armed groups accepted the amnesty in different phases. This has led to what is now known as first, second and third phase participants in the programme. The

<sup>5</sup> This was expressed by Hon. Kingsley Kuku during an online townhall meeting organized by an Ijaw Ethnic Forum. Hon. Kuku was former Special Adviser on Niger Delta and

Coordinator of the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) from January 2011 to May 2015.

first phase is made up of prominent militant leaders who participated following direct negotiations with the government. Second phase participants are mostly drawn from groups that did not demobilize when amnesty was proclaimed. This delay was mainly due to fear and distrust of the process. Third phase participants are those who registered after major militant groups and the second phase have demobilized. These different phases are as a result of the different negotiation process that led to the proclamation of amnesty.

The PAP was originally designed to last for a period of 5 Years (2010 - 2015). Disarmament and demobilization of armed militants were scheduled to take place in the first year (2010). The PAP was expected to facilitate the reintegration of fighters associated with former militant groups back into the communities of the Niger Delta from 2011 to 2015. According to the PAP office, the programme has successfully managed the transition of 30,000 fighters back into society. However, this process has continued for more than the period of five years as initially planned. While there have been several studies examining the outcomes of Nigeria's Presidential Amnesty Programme for ex-militants after ten years of implementation, there are very few policy studies that exclusively seek to explain the outcomes of PAP based on the perspectives of ex-militants, the major beneficiaries, themselves. This study seeks to address this gap by analyzing the perspectives of ex-militants concerning the outcomes of PAP and the opportunities for deepening peace and security in the Niger Delta.

The Report is divided into seven parts. In addition to this section, the subsequent sections deal with the relevance of the Presidential Amnesty Programme; the implementation of PAP; the outcomes of PAP;

Shortcomings of PAP; and moving from PAP to sustainable peacebuilding in the Niger Delta.

## Methodology

This study is based on Key Informant Interviews conducted with ex-militants in seven states of the Niger Delta region. These states are Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Ondo, and Rivers States. 58 Interviews were conducted in total. Out of this number, 20 respondents were leaders of ex-militant groups and 38 respondents were ex-militant soldiers. Respondents were drawn from the first, second and third phases of participants in the amnesty programme. The facilitators of this study was successful in interviewing key militant leaders in the Niger Delta, with the notable exception of Ebikabowei Victor Ben (Boyloaf) and Joshua Mackiver of Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. Interviews were transcribed and analysed thematically, with specific focus on understanding the perspective of ex-militants as it concerns the outcomes of the PAP.

In the Niger Delta, those who participated in armed insurgency that necessitated the amnesty are addressed as ex-militants, ex-agitators, ex-fighters, and freedom fighters. In this report, we use these names interchangeably. There is no specific reason or definition given why we use a name other than that such persons have participated in the PAP after engaging in armed insurgency in the Niger Delta.

Data collection for this study was carried out in the context of the COVID-

19 pandemic. Researchers and respondents made use of face mask and maintained a 1.5 meters' distance during interviews conducted for this study. Also, there was no interstate travel within Nigeria as part of this study. Instead, researchers based in each of the seven Niger Delta states conducted interviews with respondents based in those states.

While this study provides insights based on the perspective of ex-militants, it does not provide a comprehensive understanding of the programme. Interviews were not conducted with PAP officials or other actors who are not ex-militants. This limitation is as a result of the scope of the study.

### Relevance of the Presidential Amnesty Programme

The presidential proclamation of amnesty for armed groups in the Niger Delta and the implementation of a DDR through PAP to facilitate the reintegration of amnestied militants were necessitated by the impact of militancy on oil revenues in Nigeria. According to PAP, the Nigerian government was losing “over one million barrels of crude oil per day (bpd) estimated to be about N8.7 billion (\$58 million) as at May 2009”. During this period, “Nigeria’s crude oil production reduced from 2.2 million bpd to 700,000 bpd.” This impact was also seen in gas production as “Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) lost over \$2 billion” (Presidential Amnesty Programme, 2019).

While the presidential proclamation alluded to the agitations and

development conditions in the Niger Delta, the consistent loss of oil revenues as a result of armed militancy necessitated an urgent intervention such as the PAP. Research has shown that the implementation of PAP has led to significant increase in oil production in the Niger Delta (Walls, & During, 2020). This is also acknowledged by policy makers, especially successive coordinators of the PAP who have argued that government funding for the programme is justified by the continuous rise in crude oil production and increase in oil revenues (see table 1).

**Table 1: Changes in Oil Revenues, PAP Budget and Militant Attacks**

Year	Value of Oil Export (\$M)	Oil Price (USD)	Amnesty Programme (USD)	Militant Attacks	Oil Production Output (thousands of barrels per day)
2011	99,878	87.04	531,720,080	0	2,550
2012	96,905	86.46	478,557,496	0	2,520
2013	97,818	91.17	407,942,541	0	2,367
2014	82,586	85.60	407,942,541	0	2,423
2015	45,365	41.85	378,918,705	0	2,317
2016	34,704	36.34	280,612,245	31	2,053

Source: computed by author from relevant institutions (Ushie, 2013).

As the table shows, following the implementation of PAP, crude oil production went up above 2.5 million barrels per day in 2011 and remained above 2 million barrels per day up to 2016. This trend has continued since then. Similarly, oil revenues, subject to the price of crude oil at the international market, have increased over time compared to the period of

intensive militancy (2005 to 2009). For the Nigerian government, the increase in oil production indicates that its strategy in the Niger Delta is working. This is why scholars have argued that the PAP is a strategy designed to 'buy peace' from agitators to re-establish and guarantee continuous production of crude oil (Agbibo, 2015; Aghedo, 2012; Davidheiser and Nyiayaana, 2011; Nwokolo and Aghedo, 2018).

Clearly, the impact of armed militancy on oil revenues shows that an intervention was needed from the government to regain control of oil production in the Niger Delta. Within this context, the PAP can be considered as relevant as at the time of its initiation and implementation. However, this report goes beyond the logic of oil production in analyzing the relevance of PAP. The next section considers the perspectives of ex-militants themselves, the expected immediate beneficiaries of the amnesty proclamation, in analyzing the relevance of PAP.

## Experience of Armed Militancy - Perspectives of Militants

The Presidential Amnesty Programme design and implementation is for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of armed groups in the Niger Delta. The overarching relevance of a DDR programme for fighters is to provide them with an opportunity to exit armed groups and reintegrate into society (UN, 2006). DDR is often implemented for various reasons and in different contexts. In particular, DDR is implemented when civil wars come to an end as a result of

one-sided victories (Spear, 2006; Muggah, 2006). DDR programmes are also implemented when fighting is still ongoing (Lamb and Stainer, 2018). Peace agreements also make provisions for the implementation of DDR programmes (Capone, 2017). It has been argued that there was no agreement between the Nigerian government and armed groups in the Niger Delta (Obi, 2014). However, extensive negotiations were made between armed groups and the federal government through the Brigidi Committee and Presidential Amnesty Committee, before the groups accepted to give up their armed struggle in the region. Ex-militants interviewed for this study argued that there was an agreement and promises made to them by the negotiating team on behalf of the federal government (see table 2).

**Table 2: Promises by the FGN that made militants accept amnesty**

Macro Expectations	Micro Expectations
Develop the Niger Delta	Training to Ex-Militants
Construct the East West Road	Building of houses
Ownership of blocs to communities and indigenes of the region	Monetary payments
Environmental clean-up of the Niger Delta	Oil blocks to ex-militant leaders

Source: Interviews with Ex-Militants

In an interview with a major ex-militant leader in Rivers State, he noted that the PAP was relevant because the Federal Government wanted to continue the production of crude oil. He decided to accept the offer of amnesty because the federal government promised to develop the region, train amnestied

militants, and make monetary payments to them.<sup>6</sup> This view is shared by other ex-militant leaders interviewed for this study. For example, an ex-militant leader in Ondo State noted that the PAP “...it was needed. The PAP helped the nation (Nigeria) economically for example.”<sup>7</sup> For some other ex-militants the amnesty provided an opportunity for them to exit armed violence:

“I was actually tired of being a militant and was looking for a constructive opportunity to repent, if the Niger Delta region and Ogoni is treated as victims of Nigeria development. This is so because, no part of the region was ever considered in the sharing of national cake. No tangible appointment was coming into the region too.”<sup>8</sup>

However, this view is not held by everyone involved in militancy. For example, a prominent leader from Rivers State alleged that the PAP is an illegal strategy by the Federal Government of Nigeria:

On the amnesty programme, my views have been well known, it is illegal, it has no constitutional backing. The only way someone can be pardoned in Nigeria is through prerogative of mercy. When the officer either the Governor, Chief Judge or President, can exercise prerogative of mercy by pardoning a convicted criminal. It was faulty, unconstitutional and illegal because it was just the word of mouth of the president

without constitutional backing and that is why we went to court to challenge the legality or otherwise of the Amnesty programme proclaimed by President Yar’Adua. I was opposed to the programme because it tried to criminalize our genuine struggle. Why will the federal government grant us amnesty, what was our offence? We were agitating for a genuine cause and never did anything criminal. That is why I totally rejected the amnesty.<sup>9</sup>

This view shows that there are agitators in the Niger Delta that were critical of the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP). Also, it shows that the PAP was implemented in the context of deep divisions within the Niger Delta. Hence, while a majority of armed youth renounced militancy, accepted the amnesty and considered it relevant as at the time of its initiation and implementation, a select few did not accept or participate in it. In some instances, people who accepted the amnesty later returned to armed militancy.

## Implementation of the Presidential Amnesty Programme

<sup>6</sup> Key Informant Interview (KII) with Ateke Tom, Ex-Militant Leader, Okrika, Rivers State

<sup>7</sup> KII with Bibopere Ajube, Ex-Agitator Leader, Ondo State

<sup>8</sup> KII with Mene Peter, Ex-Militant fighter, belonging to Solomon Ndigbara's camp in Ogoni, Rivers State.

<sup>9</sup> KII with Asari Dokubo, leader of the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), Rivers State.

Prior to the proclamation of amnesty by President Yar'Adua, the government established the Presidential Amnesty Committee (PAC). The PAC was responsible for the disarmament and demobilization of amnestied ex-militants. The PAC was headed by Major General Godwin Abbe. The PAC under General Abbe designed the initial conception of the PAP. In 2009, Timi Alaibe was appointed Special Adviser on Niger Delta to President Yar'Adua and Coordinator of the PAP. The PAP took off during Mr. Alaibe's term as coordinator. He resigned in 2011 to contest for the position of Governor of Bayelsa State. Subsequently, Mr. Kingsley Kuku was appointed Special Adviser to the President and Coordinator of the Presidential Amnesty Programme in January 2011. It was Mr. Kuku who transformed PAP from a small scale programme that sought to provide vocational education for ex-militants to a large scale programme that provides onshore and overseas vocational and formal education training. These changes were what made the PAP to be seen as a locally designed and owned DDR programme. This is substantiated by a PAP official thus:

We are blessed with the Nigerian approach. Because usually, at the reintegration phase in other DDR programmes, you start to see the donor agencies and external funders trying to remove themselves. They ask local people to do what they call national ownership. However, good for us, President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua conceptualized this

programme by Nigerians, run by Nigerians, articulated, funded hundred per cent by Nigerians. He went further to choose people from the [Niger Delta] region to champion it.<sup>10</sup>

These changes significantly affected the cost of the amnesty programme. For example, the initial plan of the PAC estimated that the DDR programme will be completed within five years at the cost of 53 billion Naira. From this amount, 20 Billion Naira would be used to fund education of ex-militants, 15 Billion Naira was budgeted for monthly stipends paid to ex-militants, 14.9 billion Naira was budgeted for vocational education, 1.6 Billion Naira was budgeted for micro-credit support to ex-militants, 1.891 Billion Naira was budgeted for personnel cost, 500 million Naira was budgeted for monitoring and evaluation, 50 Million Naira was budgeted for community awareness, 7 Million Naira was budgeted for programme coordination and 5 Million Naira was budgeted to facilitate exit of the programme. This budget changed substantially following the appointment of Kingsley Kuku and his introduction of a new plan to expand the training component and other activities within the PAP. The PAP was transformed from being a short term programme focused on vocational training into an extensive programme with both vocational and formal education in Nigeria and overseas. Following these changes, the budget allocation to PAP significantly increased. Instead of the initially estimated 53 Billion Naira, the Nigerian government provided a yearly budget of more than 60 Billion Naira since 2011 (see table 3 below).

<sup>10</sup> Interview of PAP Official cited in Ebiede (2018b)

Table 3: PAC Estimate and Budget Estimate for the Implementation of PAP from 2011- 2020

Year	Amnesty Programme (Billion Naira)
PAC Estimate	53, 393, 000, 000
2011	78, 694, 571, 902
2012	74, 176, 411, 902
2013	66, 281, 093, 786
2014	63, 231, 093, 786
2015	63, 281, 093, 786

Source: The Budget Office, Federal Ministry of Finance, Nigeria

The budgetary allocations to the PAP have continued, albeit with modifications and reductions, since the election of President Buhari in 2015.<sup>11</sup>

### Programmes carried out by PAP

After disarmament and demobilization, the PAP focused extensively on the reintegration of ex-militants. This necessitated the creation of the reintegration department within PAP in 2013. The reintegration department carries out the following functions:

- Education
- Vocational Training
- Post training and Empowerment

<sup>11</sup> The data of how much PAP has received from 2015 to 2020 is missing. This need to be added to the final report.

- Peace building and Conflict Resolution
- Registry
- Job Placement and International Development Partners Engagement
- Support Services

The educational and vocational training divisions have carried out different types of training programmes. For example, the PAP reports that those who have benefitted from vocational training programmes have been trained in marine technology, heavy duty operations, welding, diving, agriculture, boat building, oil and gas technology, aviation, fashion design, hotel and catering, cosmetology and hair dressing (Amnesty News, 2013). Education programme has trained ex-agitators in disciplines such as Law, Political Science, Business Management, Mass Communication, International Relations, Public Administration, Medicine, Engineering, Applied Sciences, Accounting, Economics, Building and Construction, Information and Communication Technology (Amnesty News, 2013).

### Outcomes of PAP

In assessing the PAP, it is important to examine its outcomes at different levels in the Niger Delta. For this report, we analyse the impact of PAP at the level of the oil industry, the ex-militants and communities in the Niger Delta.

## Impact of the PAP on Ex-Militants

While there have been several studies and commentary analyzing the impact of PAP on Nigeria's oil industry and crude oil production output (see for example, Walls & During, 2020), there has been less emphasis the impact of PAP on ex-militants by policy makers in Nigeria. This goes contrary to the logic of the DDR programmes that emphasizes on the need for successful long term reintegration of ex-combatants. In analyzing the impact of PAP on the reintegration of ex-combatants, it is important to first account for the provisions of PAP that seek to facilitate the reintegration of ex-militants.

According to the Niger Delta DDR Agenda, drawn up by the Presidential Amnesty Committee (PAC), the reintegration component carried out the following activities to facilitate the reintegration of ex-militants:

- Knowledge and skills acquisition
- Financial empowerment
- Placement Programs
- Micro Credit
- Education
- Reconciliation with Communities

In analyzing the impact of these activities on reintegration, we interviewed ex-militants who provided insights based on their experience of the programme. An Ex-militant leader interviewed in Ogoni area noted that "the brief training on conflict management though not thorough has contributed to the role I play as an ex-agitator."<sup>12</sup> While the ex-militant leader sees the benefits of the training, the perspective that the training was not

"thorough" is shared by other respondents in this category. According to other ex-militant leaders interviewed, the PAP organised leadership and conflict management training for them as leaders of their groups. These trainings normally took place in South Africa. The trainings were organised by consultants recruited by the PAP office. In general, while all the ex-militant leaders interviewed for this study see the value of the training, they share the consensus that the training was not properly carried out by the consultants. Hence, they did not benefit as much as they should have if it had been properly carried out.

The training provided for ex-militant followers is the most critical output of Nigeria's PAP. According to PAP, it enrolled 30,000 ex-militants after the proclamation of amnesty. These 30,000 beneficiaries were allocated to different forms of training. A significant number of ex-militants have completed one form of training or the other. However, it is unclear how many ex-militants have completed training. There are some beneficiaries of the programme who are still undergoing training during the time of writing this report - 10 years later. In assessing the impact of the training received, we interviewed ex-militants themselves. An ex-militant interviewed in Ogoni area noted that "I chose crane operator. I received the training half way before the coordinating contractor dumped and abandoned us, just few that were lucky. The training was incomplete and grossly inadequate for anyone to practice the skill. Not possible because I was not adequately trained".<sup>13</sup> In another case, the ex-militant interviewed noted that not only was the training inadequate, it was not even carried out:

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<sup>12</sup> KII with Pastor Nature Kieghe, Ex-Militant Leader, Ogoni Area, Rivers State.

<sup>13</sup> KII with Ex-Militant Fighter, belonging to Pastor Nature Kieghe group in Ogoni Area, Rivers State.

“No training in my chosen discipline. The contractor took us to Lagos and I was dumped in a hotel in Aja Lagos. Nonsense. No vocational training was given to me so I don’t have any skill that will enable me source for job.”<sup>14</sup>

Another ex-militant interviewed noted the following:

“It went very well but the six months was short. The small welding machine to perfect the training we received.”<sup>15</sup>

During interviews with ex-militants from Akwa Ibom State, most of them have enrolled as 3<sup>rd</sup> phase militants, one noted that “the only thing I have benefited is the training he received in the catering field.”<sup>16</sup>

These challenges were identified as far back as 2013. In PAP documents published in 2013, an ex-militant undergoing training was interviewed. His remark showed that there were problems with the training they were receiving:

“The fact is that we are facing some challenges in our training. First, the people that are training us are not giving us good training. We are not working very well. Some days, we will come for training and we will stay here for about 30 minutes and they will dismiss us to go back home. Our training is supposed to be for nine months and we have been here for four months now.

In the four months, we have achieved nothing. We have not learnt anything; I can say that the four months have been wasted.” (Gist, 2013: p.78)

In Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with ex-militants in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, the study found that many received incomplete training or have been involved in training processes that require further certifications. For example, one ex-militant explained that he was sent to South Africa on a six-month Marine training, but has been waiting for the second phase of the training, to no avail. Rather than complete the practical aspect of the training he was invited in 2018 to Yenagoa for a business training with the promise that he would be given money to set up a provision store, but after the training, nothing was given to him, rather they gave money to few persons who were not ex-agitators to set up stores. Meanwhile the certificate he obtained in South Africa has expired, therefore he cannot use it to seek employment. In a similar situation, another ex-militant explained how he has gone for two different trainings, but has not received starter packs to set up his business.<sup>17</sup> From this discussion, it seems that while the PAP depended on contractors (vendors) to provide training to ex-militants abroad, some of these vendors may not have delivered services that will enable ex-militants find jobs after their training. This may be contributing to such ex-militants being unable to gain employment and experience meaningful economic reintegration in their communities and cities.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> KII with ex-militant fighter, belonging to Ateke Tom's Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV), Rivers State.

<sup>16</sup> KII with Oscar Vincent Ekpe, Ex-Agitorator (Third Phase), Mbo Local Government, Akwa Ibom State.

<sup>17</sup> FGD with Ex-Militants in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.

This ex-militant recounted their experience while trying to gain training through PAP:

He is a foot soldier to General Raymond and the only one who was called for training. He narrated his experience to the team. ' They took us to Benin for training in fishery and poultry for two weeks. Myself and other ex-agitators insisted that a training meant to sustain us should not just last for two weeks. When we arrived Benin, there was no prior arrangement as to how the training will go. However, we were given forms to fill, after which we were asked to take a group photo. We objected to taking the photograph when we suspected they were only looking for evidence that they had trained us. After two weeks of doing nothing, we were taken to a farm where there were few birds. Out of curiosity, we asked for explanation why there were no structures on ground for either a poultry or a fish farm. The officials informed us they were expecting more birds and fishes before setting the stage. Two weeks later, they stopped our feeding, saying that they had ran out of funds. The next day, the hotel management informed our group leader that we are to quit our rooms. We immediately sought for the number of one of the staff at the PAP office. The following day,

one Etoromi Omawumi Varentina, the Reintegration officer, visited us. While briefing us, she explained that the training was meant to last for one month. Later that day, she visited the farm where the supposed training was to take place. She was shocked to see that no preparation was made to commence the training. We were later informed that our supervisor had been arrested by the hotel management on the claim that he had not completed payment for our accommodation. We asked the hotel management to give us information about his whereabouts but they refused. The official that visited us made funds available for us to return to our various destinations. Since then, I have not received invitation for training.<sup>18</sup>

While most ex-militants interviewed for this study explained that the trainings they received have been inadequate to enable them find work, official publications from PAP show that a significant number of beneficiaries have been trained in reputable institutions abroad. Former PAP officials claim credit for initiating these trainings that have placed beneficiaries of PAP in these institutions. One key challenge is that it is not clear whether all those who participated in these high quality trainings and educational programmes were ex-militants. However, those who have participated in high quality programmes are less likely to complain of poor training. This creates another dimension in understanding the

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<sup>18</sup> KII with Okagbare Paul, Ex-Militant Fighter (2<sup>nd</sup> Phase), Ughelli, Delta State.

outcome of the PAP that requires further interrogation.

During interviews with ex-militants, most of them explained that individuals who did not participate in the armed militancy also benefited from the training opportunities provided by the programme. PAP officials explain that such individuals may have been impacted by the armed conflict. What is unclear however is if those said to be impacted by the conflict are part of the total number of 30,000 ex-agitators registered in the PAP. While this is unclear, our study finds that ex-militants themselves were receptive to the inclusion of ordinary civilians who are from communities in the Niger Delta in the PAP programme. An ex-militant leader interviewed explained it thus:

to achieve holistic peace in the Niger Delta, both ex-agitators and non-agitators should be engaged because if the non-agitators are neglected, they could also constitute another set of militants and crisis would spring up in the region again.<sup>19</sup>

The lack of transparency in determining who is an ex-agitator and who is a non-agitator that benefited from the PAP makes it more challenging to analyse its impact. Our findings show that the result is mixed. While many ex-militants may have undergone a complete training and received economic empowerment that allows them to experience economic reintegration, the opacity of PAP's data with regards to who is an ex-agitator and who is a non-agitator that benefited from PAP makes it challenging to ascertain the extent to which the former has gained a source of livelihood as a result of training received through PAP. On the other

hand, it is not uncommon in the Niger Delta for ex-militants to protest in demand for employment. The respondents for this study are also mostly unemployed ex-militants, with most explaining that their training has been incomplete. This shows that the training received by a significant number of ex-agitators through PAP may not have prepared them for gaining independent livelihood. This is a challenge that is further buttressed by the continuous dependence of ex-agitators on the monthly stipends paid by PAP.

The payment of 65,000 Naira monthly to ex-militants was introduced as part of the original plan of the programme to ensure that those who accept amnesty will have a means of sustenance while undergoing training that will enable them find work. This has been ongoing since 2010 despite the fact that a significant number of ex-militants have completed their training. Ex-militants interviewed for this study reveal that they still depend on this stipend in the absence of jobs. For example, an ex-militant interviewed in Delta State had this to say:

Yes, I receive the monthly payments of (65,000 each) from the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) and also for my group. The payment isn't enough for my upkeep and there is need for a review because the payment itself is not regular and is obsolete.

In Rivers State, an ex-militant explained that:

For a year and five months today I haven't received any payment. My leader was only giving me N30,000 out of the N65,000 saying that he's

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<sup>19</sup> KII with Asari Dokubo (Ibid)

settling those staff in the office. Very inadequate to keep me away from violence crime. I noticed a change for almost 6 years when my leader reduced my payment from N65,000 to N30,000. I don't receive payment directly from government but from my leader and not regular too. Yes, I received my monthly payment through my boss. Where is work in Nigeria? Government shouldn't dream of ending PAP else, Niger Delta will boil again. I will support the regrouping and make sure oil productions are reduced to zero barrel per day.<sup>20</sup>

There is also dissatisfaction with the monthly payments. Some ex-militants complain that while they continue receiving the stipulated amount, their financial needs have since gone beyond what it was when they accepted amnesty. Hence, they called for an upward review of this amount:

Yes, I still receive my payment of N65,000. No value, how can I continue to receive 65,000 and no review yet size of my family is increasing by the day. Today I have four children and we all depend on the 65,000 naira only. As for me no. I receive directly from government but some receive their own from our leader. Beneficiaries under my leader is up to 2,500. None of us receive direct payment from government. What has the government put in place for in place for us as alternatives to ending the programme? Any attempt to end the programme will cause mayhem in this country. I don't have any other source of income and all they

promised me no one have been accomplished. We will go back to the creek and make sure oil productions reduce to zero barrel per day. The conditions for ceasefire then will be negotiated not going to be N65,000 again.<sup>21</sup>

Some other ex-militants expressed disappointment that the monthly payment is not regular. An ex-militant interviewed was asked about the value and timing of the monthly stipends. He responded thus:

Yes. It means a lot and very helpful to me and my kids... it doesn't come often, sometimes once in two months and presently they are owing me two months. If they decide to end this payment, it will be life for life - we will go back to the creeks. It will be the last fight.<sup>22</sup>

The interviews with ex-militants reveal that they continue to depend on the monthly payment from the PAP. It also shows that ex-militants are aware of the reduced value of this monthly stipend owing to inflation and other macro-economic changes in Nigeria. In some cases, ex-militants pay fixed percentages to their group leaders. From our interviews, some ex-militant leaders receive up to 40% of the monthly stipends from each of the ex-militant fighter registered under their camp during the demobilisation phase. However, not all ex-militant leaders are engaged in this fraudulent practice. This practice explains the control some ex-militant leaders still have over their followers.

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<sup>20</sup> KII with Christian Okey Neemene, Ex-Militant Fighter in Ogoni Area, Rivers State

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> KII with Ex-Militant Fighter belonging to Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV).

## Relationship between Ex-Militants and their Communities

According to principles behind DDR programmes, improved relationship between ex-combatants and other members of their communities are essential to successful reintegration (Ebiede, 2018b). In Nigeria's Niger Delta, the DDR Agenda identified local conflict resolution and reconciliation with communities as key activities in the reintegration of ex-militants. In its initial implementation budget, the PAP allocated 50 Million Naira for community awareness. The budgetary provisions, when compared to other activities, show that rebuilding community relationships was not among the top priorities of the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) in the Niger Delta region. This may reflect the complexity of the conflicts in the Niger Delta.

While civil wars tend to undermine relationships within communities affected by violent conflicts, the outcome of this effect is often determined by the nature and type of conflicts. The overarching driver of the conflict in the Niger Delta has been identified as disagreements between communities and the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) over the distribution of revenue derived from oil production in the region (Obi, 2010). However, research shows that beyond these overarching conflicts, the Niger Delta region was characterized by several internecine ethnic and communal conflicts (Ebiede, 2017a).

Conflicts such as the Ijaw-Itsekiri crisis (Ukiwo, 2007), Okrika crisis (Joab-Peterside, 2007) and the Peremabiri crisis (Ebiede, 2017b) shaped the emergence of armed militia groups in these areas. For example, Government Ekpemupolo, popularly known as Tompolo, was first a leader of the Ijaws during the crisis between the latter and the Itsekiri communities in Warri before

he became a 'General Officer Commanding (GOC)' of the Movement of the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). Tom Polo's emergence as MEND's GOC is directly linked to his role during the Ijaw-Itsekiri crisis. In Okrika of Rivers State, Ateke Tom played a prominent role in the conflict between the Tubonijus and Konijus over kingship in the community (Joab-Peterside, 2007). In Bayelsa, militia leaders such as Paul Eris, popularly known as Ogunboss, had been key players in intra-communal crisis in Peremabiri community that predates anti-state armed militancy (Ebiede, 2017b). In all of these crises, only the Ijaw-Itsekiri crisis is against an external group. The other conflicts involve different factions of the same communities.

Although violent hostilities within these communities have largely ceased before the emergence of armed militancy, the conflicts were not resolved. The divisions that these conflicts generated in the communities were still present following the outbreak of militancy. The new powers gained as a result of militancy further weakened those in opposing camps that did not join or create their own militant groups. This tenuous relation between militant groups and some members of their communities that had hitherto opposed them in communal conflicts informs the need for PAP to address local level peacebuilding if it aims to contribute to sustainable peace in the Niger Delta.

Overall, there have not been any significant incidences of conflicts between ex-militants and other members of their communities. Instead, there has been consistent rise of ex-militants as political and civil society actors in the Niger Delta since the proclamation of amnesty in the region. Examples of ex-militants gaining political power are common in Rivers State. For example, Ateke Tom,

an ex-militant leader in Okrika, was crowned as traditional ruler in Okochiri community. Sobomabo Jackreece, an ex-militant leader, was appointed Chairman of Asari Toru Local Government Area in 2016. Notably, Farah Dagogo, a former field commander of Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in Rivers State, was declared winner of legislative elections and became a member of the Rivers State House of Assembly in 2015. As a Legislator, he was Chairman of the House Committee on Education. He progressed in his political career and was declared winner of the elections for the position of representative of the Degema/Bonny Federal Constituency in the National House of Representatives. Across Rivers State, ex-militant leaders and their former fighters hold different positions at both the level of community and the state.

In Bayelsa State, ex-militant leaders are known to have played important role in politics since they accepted amnesty from the Nigerian government. In Southern Ijaw Local Government Area, two former militant leaders, Africa Ukparasia and Joshua Maciver, have served as Chairmen at different times. Across communities, ex-militants have been elected or appointed as Chairmen of Community Development Committees (CDC). Overall, ex-militants have become part of everyday life of communities across the Niger Delta. An exception to this in Bayelsa State is Ebikabowei Victor Ben, popularly known as Boyloaf. While Boyloaf remains active as a contractor in oil and gas industry, reports indicate he has not been present or actively involved in affairs in his community located in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. He relocated to Abuja and distanced himself from most of his followers since

he accepted PAP. Boyloaf's case is an exception as most ex-militant leaders still participate and influence the affairs of their communities and enjoy the loyalty of their followers.

Ex-militants interviewed for this study did not report any disagreements or conflict with other members of their communities. Instead, there are indications that ex-militants are integral part of community governance. For example, one ex-militant interviewed in Bayelsa explained his experience thus:

Well, it has impacted my status very positively because my community has found me very worthy as a peacemaker after the Amnesty Programme.<sup>23</sup>

In some other instances, ex-militants emerged as security volunteers in their communities:

I play the role of security adviser to the leadership of my community. I also participated in the formations of vigilante to provide some level of security in the community. These roles are very important and my community values it. The brief training on conflict management though not thorough has contributed to the role I play as an ex-agitator.<sup>24</sup>

This quote above shows that some ex-militants link their positive role in communities with a specific type of training - conflict management - that they received from PAP. This can be seen as a positive outcome of PAP. It also shows that there are opportunities for ex-militants to work with members of their communities to promote

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<sup>23</sup> KII with Ex-Militant Fighter, Southern Ijaw Local Government Area, Bayelsa State.

<sup>24</sup> KII with Christian Okey Neemene, Ex-Militant Fighter in Ogoni Area, Rivers State

peace, security and development. However, such opportunities have to be based on mutual trust and not fear. In some instances, ex-militants report that the civil attitudes of community members towards them are based on fear. This is captured in an interview with an ex-militant in Rivers State thus: *“though the community was afraid of me but never encountered any crisis with my community members”*.<sup>25</sup> Another ex-militant from the same community explains the complex relationship between community members and ex-militants thus:

*“Not generally but good numbers of ex-agitators maintain cordial relationship with other members of my community. I feel safe because my community members are at peace with me. Most ex-agitators are members of community vigilante and they cooperate on the issue of security.”*<sup>26</sup>

In some instances, ex-militants recognise that the ‘respect’ accorded them in their communities are not voluntarily given, but based on fear: *“I was respected by my community, though I was like a threat to them so their respect for me was not a genuine type”*.<sup>27</sup> In another interview with an ex-militant in Okrika area of Rivers State, he explained that *“I have a close relationship with my community There had not been any problem because our leader is in charge and he makes sure people are living in peace with one another”*.<sup>28</sup> The notion that his leader is in charge of the community does not necessarily indicate acceptance of the authority of such leader. For example, the ex-militant leader also explained that although they (ex-militants)

*“have been re-integrated into the community, previously people were afraid of me but now I can discuss freely with them”*.<sup>29</sup>

He further explained that *“as a traditional ruler I have been able to maintain peace in my domain.”*<sup>30</sup> This shows that PAP provided an opportunity for ex-militants to transform their relationship with other members of their communities and move from cooperation based on fear based on the violent tendencies of militants to cooperation based on respect as ex-militant leaders occupy positions of authority in communities. However, insights derived from the history of conflict in the area shows that ordinary community members are less likely to challenge the authority of this ex-militant leader, even when they disagree with him.

Ex-militants identify crime and cultism as drivers of conflicts between them and other actors in their communities. In this instance, ex-militants interviewed explained that cultists within their communities are often involved in violence. This puts ex-militants, especially those of them involved in community security and vigilante, against cultists. It also leads to incidences of reprisal attacks, especially when ex-militants are involved in the arrests of cultists. This shows cooperation between ex-militants and members of their communities, especially in the area of security. According to an ex-militant interviewed *“in some communities, Ex-agitators are in leadership positions, therefore it makes it easier to*

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> KII with Mene Peter, Ex-Militant fighter, belonging to Solomon Ndigbara's camp in Ogoni, Rivers State.

<sup>28</sup> KII with Ex-Militant Fighter, belonging to former Niger Delta Vigilante, Okrika, Rivers State.

<sup>29</sup> KII with Ateke Tom (ibid)

<sup>30</sup> KII with Ateke Tom (ibid)

*cooperate on the issue of security, setting up vigilante group”.*<sup>31</sup>

There are ex-militants, especially leaders, who claim to have used their position and influence to contribute to community development, thus building positive relationships with other members of their communities. Example of such ex-militant is Ajube of Ondo State, aka Shoot at Sight, who explained the following:

It is a very cordial one. My community is a real village. I told the head of your team to come down in person to Ondo state and interview my King. It is the King that will give you the better side of information about me and my support for the community. I take no boast but I can state without ambiguity that I have contributed significantly to open up the community for development and investments. If I have billions of Naira in my name today, I most assuredly spend a significant part of it, support the advancement of my people and everyone can attest to it. Just come there and see for yourselves.<sup>32</sup>

This view is also shared by some ex-militants in Bayelsa State. Most ex-militants interviewed in Bayelsa State hold the view that their relationships with their communities have improved significantly since accepting amnesty. They give examples of how they are seen as community leaders in their own rights, and are usually involved in decision making in their communities. For example, Gen Kemesoute is the current CDC chairman of Apoi

community in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, while Gen. Weris, was appointed the second Chairman of the Bayelsa State Waterways Security Task Force after Gen. Africa Ukparasia. Speaking further in Bayelsa, an ex-militant noted the following:

We are not threatened by anyone as a result of our past engagement with militancy. Ex-agitators can contribute to the development of their communities.<sup>33</sup>

In other instances, ex-militant leaders recognize the role the presidential amnesty played in shaping the relationship of ex-militants and their communities. One ex-militant leader explained that “*most of the other leaders are fully reintegrated into their communities. The amnesty has helped to decriminalize the militants and justify their cause.*”<sup>34</sup> This shows that ex-militants recognize that there were challenges in the relationship with their communities. As explained previously, ex-militant leaders in some communities have taken initiatives themselves to address these challenges. Many, especially in Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta States, have been charitable with their resources towards other members of their communities. They provide funds to pay fees, support wedding ceremonies and burials, pay medical bills and engage in other charitable works in their communities. This contributes to the increasing social capital of ex-militants, especially their leaders, in some communities.

Some ex-militant leaders have played more prominent role in their communities compared to others. For example, Tompolo has set up the Tompolo Foundation which provides

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<sup>31</sup> KII with Mene Peter, Ex-Militant fighter, belonging to Solomon Ndigbara’s camp in Ogoni, Rivers State.

<sup>32</sup> KII with Bibopere Ajube (ibid)

<sup>33</sup> Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with Ex-Militant Fighters in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.

<sup>34</sup> KII with Asari Dokubo (ibid)

scholarships and development projects in rural ijaw communities in Delta and Bayelsa States. Tompolo has maintained strong influence in these communities and he is held in very high regard by both old and young. Most recently, he hosted the congress of the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) in Oporoza. This towering influence explains why perceptions of persecution of Tompolo by President Muhammadu Buhari's administration led to threats and fears of outbreak of violence targeting oil industries in Ijaw communities across the Niger Delta.

Field research with ex-militants also found some areas where challenges exist in their relationship with other members of their communities. This is particularly observed among members of the second and third phase participants in Presidential Amnesty Programme. For example, one ex-militant interviewed stated that "the major cause of problem between ex-agitators and community members is the issue of 'marching ground (unsolicited levy)' by chiefs before contractor can implement project in community. This singular act is responsible for poor quality job by contractors."<sup>35</sup> This act of extortion generates challenges and problems within communities as some oppose it. In this instance, ex-militants report that they oppose extortion and this is seen as opposition to the leadership of the community that is responsible for such acts.

In Cross River State, ex-militants belonging to the defunct Bakassi Strike Force explained that the relationship with other members of their community is challenging. During fieldwork for this report, members of the group explained that most of the members of the Communities were against them, because they feared that there might be an outbreak of war between the Militants and the Nigerian Military. He

further stated that some of them believed that they were the reason why they lost their loved ones and their means of livelihood during the struggle. Within the community, the members of the communities could not challenge the ex-agitators because they were afraid of them. One of the sources of disagreement between the ex-agitators and the community members is revenge for their loved ones; they sometimes ambush the ex-agitators because they believed that they were the causes of their problems. This dynamic is quite unique to the Bakassi area. Communities in Bakassi area did not have similar experience of militancy as with other parts of the Niger Delta such as Bayelsa, Rivers and Delta States. Hence, militant groups may have evolved differently, affecting community members. Also, this group is still struggling with inclusion in the Amnesty Programme, even though they claim to be part of the third phase. Hence, this lack of clarity about the purpose and nature of the group may have created fear and tension in communities where they operated, hence leading to opposition by other members of their communities.

Overall, the fieldwork data shows that the relationship between ex-militants and other members of their communities is a complex dynamic of shifting alliances. In many instances, especially in Delta State and notably Gbaramatu Kingdom, ex-militants are seen as 'freedom fighters' and are welcomed without reservations in communities. In other cases, ex-militants have gained inroad into the political process of their states, leading to holding positions of power at local, state and national levels. In Bayelsa and Rivers States, ex-militants have played fundamental roles as traditional rulers and CDC Chairmen. Interviews conducted with ex-militants indicate that they feel reintegrated - accepted by

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<sup>35</sup> KII with Ex-Militant Fighter, Ogoni Area, Rivers State

members of their communities. However, conflict issues that shaped the relationship between ex-militants and their communities prior to the beginning of amnesty remain unaddressed in most communities. Hence, while it may seem that there are no discords between ex-militants and members of their communities, this relationship may not be driven by genuine reconciliation or acceptance, but by fear and power that ex-militants, especially their leaders, may have gained as a result of their participation in the amnesty process.

### Unfulfilled Expectations

In preparation for the proclamation of amnesty by President Yar'Adua, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) inaugurated different committees to negotiate and persuade armed groups to end hostilities against oil industry infrastructure in the Niger Delta. These committees include the Bridigi Committee, Ledum Mitee Committee and the Presidential Amnesty Committee. During negotiations, the Federal Government agreed to address the root cause of conflicts in the Niger Delta. While the proclamation of amnesty did not include any developmental or individual conditions that the federal government will meet for members of armed groups to denounce militancy, it stated that: *"...whereas the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria acknowledges that the challenges of the Niger Delta arose mainly from the inadequacies of previous attempts at meeting the yearnings and aspiration of the people, and have set in motion machinery for the sustainable development of the Niger Delta States."*<sup>36</sup> This proclamation clearly created expectations of 'sustainable

development of the Niger Delta'. In addition to this proclamation, the Ledum Committee made recommendations that included infrastructural development, environmental remediation and the inclusion of host communities in the ownership of oil mining leases. These recommendations influenced the discussions that led to the acceptance of amnesty and renunciation of militancy in Nigeria's Niger Delta. Remember during the zoom meeting, Kingsley Kuku commented that disarmament and reintegration were only one part of the amnesty programme and that the other 2 Parts were left unfulfilled---need to check what those were.

Ex-militants interviewed explained that the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) had not met their expectations and fulfilled the promises made to them before accepting amnesty. A consistent narrative across all militant leaders is that the negotiators, on behalf of the Federal Government, made a promise of financial reward to them and development for their communities. For example, a prominent militant leader in Rivers State stated that *"the federal government wants continued production of crude oil while the Niger Delta is talking about development. The agitators have kept their promises but the government did not subscribe to our demands."* The Federal Government promised *"...training, empowerment and development of the region. Infrastructural development, building of houses to my boys and monetary payment"*.<sup>37</sup> Another prominent militant leader, also in Rivers State, explained that leaders of militant groups were *"promised monthly stipends, wardrobe allowance, house rent, technical skills, and other things. But has the programme fulfilled these promises?"*. An ex-militant leader

<sup>36</sup> Presidential Proclamation of Amnesty

<sup>37</sup> KII with Ateke Tom (ibid)

that accepted amnesty in the second phase explained that they were promised 20 Million Naira each to start their own businesses, but he got only 5 Million Naira. He is aware of other 2<sup>nd</sup> phase generals who got paid 10 Million Naira after their training at Obubra.<sup>38</sup>

The evidence gathered from interviews with ex-militant leaders shows that while the Federal Government made promises that were linked to the overarching narratives of development and resource control in the Niger Delta, promises linked to financial needs of ex-militant leaders were also made. Since the proclamation of amnesty, ex-militant leaders have been identified as beneficiaries of government patronage in forms of contracts and other business opportunities. Ex-militant leaders have also been beneficiaries of sub-contracting work with major oil companies in the Niger Delta. Within the PAP, ex-militant leaders have also been awarded contracts to implement different aspects of the programme. Involvement of ex-militants in contracts and other forms of patronage from federal and state governments in Nigeria fulfils some of the expectations they had prior to accepting amnesty and renouncing militancy.

Beyond ex-militant leaders, their foot soldiers and fighters also had their own expectations from the amnesty programme. All ex-militants interviewed for this study explained that as a condition for accepting amnesty, they were promised training, housing, job placement and business opportunities. With the exception of housing, this promise is what the training component of Nigeria's PAP's reintegration programme seeks to achieve. However, ex-militants explain that they have not been offered job opportunities. The training and education of ex-militants will provide

them with the skills to enable them find employment in the private sector. Yes, the evidence suggests that most ex-militants trained under the PAP have been finding it difficult to find work in the private sector (Ebiede, 2018). The primary reason for this outcome is the disconnect between the training and the demand for labour by the private sector in the Niger Delta. No proper Opportunity Mapping was done to identify real possibilities for employment/self-employment.

Equally, the poor quality of training most ex-militants received, as reported by them during our fieldwork, contributes to this outcome. Ex-militants see their inability to find jobs as an unfulfilled expectation of the PAP. Also no assistance was given in job placement and life skills training that would help beneficiaries get jobs. Ex-militants often lack the skills to apply for a job, conduct a successful interview and demonstrate the work ethic necessary to hold down a job. In addition to lack of jobs, ex-militants interviewed expressed frustrations that the government failed to provide them with housing as promised during the negotiations for amnesty.

At both the individual and group levels, the PAP has been characterised by unfulfilled expectations for majority of ex-militants and their communities. While this outcome is directly linked to the PAP, it is also as a result of failed strategies of Nigeria's government in the Niger Delta. Federal government intervention agencies such as the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and other federal institutions with interest in the Niger Delta such as the Nigerian National Petroleum Commission (NNPC) and Ministry of Petroleum, have failed to meaningfully contribute to infrastructure and human

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<sup>38</sup> KII with General Weris, Ex-Militant Leader, Southern Ijaw Local Government Area, Bayelsa State

development in the Niger Delta. This is several years after President Yar'Adua proclaimed that the Federal Government "have set in motion machinery for the sustainable development of the Niger Delta States."<sup>39</sup> This failure had led to unfulfilled expectations shared by ex-militants and their communities.

### Sustained Networks of Militancy

One expected outcome of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes is the disbanding of armed groups. This normally occurs in the demobilization phase of DDR programmes. During this phase, ex-combatants are separated from their former armed groups and are no longer under the control of their former leaders. This process of demobilization often occurs through psychosocial counselling and orientation that takes place during encampment (Knight & Ozerdem, 2004). In Nigeria's PAP programme, demobilization took place at camps across the Niger Delta. The most prominent is the Obubra camp in Cross River State. Participation in demobilization camp was determined by the submission of names by leaders of militant groups. Those whose names were submitted were invited to the camps to participate in various demobilization exercises, such as transformational training, peacebuilding and conflict resolution training, counselling, career guidance, wellness assessment, reintegration classification, education and vocational placement, graduation and discharge from camps. The overall objective of this process was to ensure that ordinary fighters are no longer within the control of the leaders of the militia

groups they belonged to prior to accepting amnesty.

Breaking ties between ex-combatants and the network that were forged during their involvement in armed conflicts is not easy. The group leaders nominated their followers for the amnesty programme, so the followers owe allegiance to their group leader. During various periods in the past 10 years, the stipends have been paid through the group leaders, who often take a substantial cut of each person's stipend. In most cases, these networks are important for their post-conflict survival. For some, the network is the only social and political capital they have. Hence, instead of breaking ties, they tend to stay connected and use these networks to further their interests in post-conflict societies. In the Niger Delta, most ex-militants have continued to maintain ties with their former comrades and leaders. Among those interviewed for this study, we find that not only do they maintain ties with their former comrades, ex-militant leaders still play an important role in the everyday survival of their followers. For example, some ex-militants interviewed explained that in the absence of a sustainable livelihood, they depend on the leaders of their former militant groups to support them. A key ex-militant leader in Rivers State explained that he provides "financial support" and that there is a "... a lot of pressure on me. Payment of house rent, medical bills, school fees, feeding..."<sup>40</sup>. Another ex-militant leader in Ondo State explained that his former soldiers are still linked to him: "many of them work for my private companies".<sup>41</sup> However, a few ex-militant explained that they are no longer depending on their former leaders.

Overall, the evidence suggests that the continuous link between ex-militants and leaders of the former militant

<sup>39</sup> Presidential Proclamation of Amnesty

<sup>40</sup> KII with Ateke Tom (ibid)

<sup>41</sup> KII with Bibopere Ajube (ibid)

groups they belonged to is based on economic incentives. In the absence of jobs and other sources of livelihood, ex-militants turn to their leaders to help them meet their economic needs. Despite the poor economic outcomes for ex-militant fighters, most of their leaders have received economic and political reward for participating in the PAP. This is why ex-militant leaders are able to provide support when their followers come to them. This outcome is therefore linked to the failure of Nigeria's PAP to provide ordinary ex-militants who enrolled in the programme with sustainable livelihood independent from their former leaders.

However, it is important to note that not all ex-militants depend on their former leaders for survival. While many remain unemployed, some ex-militants are involved in various activities to support themselves. Also, the former leaders tend to maintain a smaller network of core supporters, unlike in their days of active militancy. In some instance, ex-militant leaders have relocated completely to Abuja, leaving their former fighters in the villages and cities of the Niger Delta. Ex-militant leaders who remain in the villages and cities of the Niger Delta are more likely to maintain a huge following from their former fighters. Equally, they tend to be the leaders who remain powerful in determining the outcomes of political processes and everyday events in their communities.

Beyond the militant networks as social capital for ex-militants, there are also macro issues in the Niger Delta society that sustains militant networks after the implementation of PAP. One of such issue is the continuing market for armed youth in every election cycle. While the violence targeting oil industry infrastructure may have been suspended, the PAP did not end violence as a commodity in the Niger Delta, especially during elections. Hence, it remains important for

political actors to have easy access to youth who are able to carry out violence to influence electoral outcomes during elections. This market has made some ex-militant powerful and influential, as their continuous control of youth who can be mobilized for violence makes them important actors in the political process at all levels of society in the Niger Delta.

### Training without Economic reintegration

As discussed earlier, Nigeria's PAP has focused extensively on vocational and educational training of participants in the DDR programme. While there is no clear number of how many have completed training, the PAP has consistently noted that it disarmed and demobilized 30,000 former fighters in three phases. At least 17,000 of these ex-fighters have undergone one form of training or the other. This implies that there are about 13, 000 beneficiaries that are yet to be trained. In our assessment, we focus on those that have been trained and analyse how this training has facilitated their economic reintegration.

As discussed earlier, most of the ex-militants interviewed for this study claim that they have been unable to find work. This has created a dependence on the monthly stipends paid by the PAP. According to ex-militants interviewed, the monthly stipend of 65,000 Naira is their main source of support, as expressed by their demands for the continuation of this payment. An ex-militant leader interviewed for this study explained that "they should continue the payment. If they don't, there will be

much trouble".<sup>42</sup> This view was also shared by another prominent Leader in Rivers State thus: "for now the government should continue with the payment. The reason being that most of the boys don't have job and they (government) failed to fulfill their promises."<sup>43</sup>

Beyond ex-militant leaders, ordinary fighters that are most affected by the monthly stipends and lack of economic reintegration have also expressed their frustrations and the need for the government to continue the monthly payment. Among those interviewed, one ex-militant explained that if the government ends the payment, "we will go back to the creek and make sure oil productions reduce to zero barrel per day. The conditions for ceasefire then will be negotiated not going to be N65,000 again."<sup>44</sup> Another ex-militant explained that "in my opinion, government should review the amount and continue because any attempt to stop this payment will resort to another era of oil facilities destructions."<sup>45</sup> Similarly, an ex-militant in Bayelsa State explaining the link between the absence of jobs and continuity of the monthly stipends noted that "where is work in Nigeria? Government shouldn't dream of it at all, if not Niger Delta will boil again."<sup>46</sup> According to ex-militants in Bayelsa State, many original ex-militants are yet to be trained, and even those trained are yet to be given starter packs and they have not been properly reintegrated into society. They suspect that many of those currently involved in sea piracy, kidnapping, oil bunkering and illegal refining of crude oil are mostly those who were disarmed but were not captured in the PAP, therefore not receiving the 65,000 Naira monthly stipends. Clearly, this draws a link between the failed

economic reintegration of ex-militants and rising crime in rural areas of the Niger Delta.<sup>47</sup>

The evidence gathered through interviews with ex-militants suggests that the monthly payment provides a financial incentive for ex-militants not to return to violence. However, this financial incentive has also been a disincentive for sustainable reintegration. In the absence of jobs in the Niger Delta, ex-militants prefer to remain enrolled in the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP). This has also generated a struggle for other unemployed youth to seek opportunities to participate in the programme. From this evidence, it is clear that terminating the amnesty programme, especially the monthly stipends to ex-militants, without developing and implementing a strategy for economic reintegration, may lead to an outbreak of violent protests which may lay the foundation for renewed militancy in the Niger Delta region.

## Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

This study set out to analyse the outcome of Nigeria's PAP for ex-militants in the oil rich Niger Delta region. In doing this, the study interviewed ex-militants. The analysis of the qualitative data derived from

<sup>42</sup> KII with Asari Dokubo (ibid)

<sup>43</sup> KII with Ateke Tom (ibid)

<sup>44</sup> KII with Ex-Militant Fighter, Okrika Area, Rivers State.

<sup>45</sup> KII with Ex-Militant Fighter, Ogoni Area, Rivers State.

<sup>46</sup> KII with Ex-Militant Fighter, Southern Ijaw Local Government Area, Bayelsa State.

<sup>47</sup> See Report of Insecurity in South South.

interviews with ex-militants shows the following findings:

- **Nigeria's PAP has different outcomes for ordinary ex-militants and their leaders.**

The study shows that Nigeria's PAP has a positive economic outcome for ex-militant leaders. While some of these militant leaders have directly benefitted from patronage within PAP, most of the leaders have benefited from patronage from different levels of government. While these economic benefits are not derived directly from the PAP, it was the programme that created the conditions for them to become legitimate economic actors in different areas of the economy. Ordinary ex-militants have not shared in this positive outcome. Instead, foot soldiers have mainly depended on the monthly stipends they received from the amnesty programme, of which some of the stipend goes to the group leader.

- **Nigeria's PAP provided an opportunity to end armed militancy in the Niger Delta**

The study finds that ex-militants saw the amnesty as an opportunity to end armed militancy in the Niger Delta. However, this expectation is based on the notion that the window of peace created by the amnesty programme will also be used by the federal government of Nigeria to address the root causes of armed militancy in the Niger Delta. **The failure of the Nigerian government to fulfill its own obligations in the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) has created dissatisfaction among ex-militants and members of**

**their communities in the Niger Delta.**

- **Nigeria's PAP has not been able to achieve Economic Reintegration for Ex-Militant Fighters**

The programmes designed by Nigeria's PAP to facilitate the economic reintegration of ex-militants in the Niger Delta have not achieved its objectives. While significant funds have been invested in the amnesty programme, majority of ex-militants interviewed complained that the training they received did not prepare them for the job market in the Niger Delta and beyond. While ex-militants were interviewed during the demobilization exercise, there was no job market research or opportunity mapping in the Niger Delta. Hence, ex-militants were either trained for jobs that did not exist or given incomplete training that made it difficult for them to find work in a competitive environment.

- **The relationship between Ex-Militants and their Communities is shaped by their involvement in armed militancy**

This study shows that experience from armed militancy continues to play a role in how ex-militants and other members of their communities live together. In some communities, this has led to peaceful co-existence as ex-militants are seen as freedom fighters. This is not the case in communities where militancy is linked to intra-communal disputes, cultism and other

forms of violence that targeted members of communities.

- **Leaders of Former Militant Groups still maintain a network of their former fighters.**

The study showed that ex-militant leaders still have a significant influence over their former fighters. This is because they provide economic support to these former fighters.

## Recommendations

Based on these core findings, this study makes the following recommendations to enable the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) achieve its objectives:

- **There is an urgent need for a verification of the number of ex-militants registered in the amnesty programme.**

After 10 years of implementation, the Presidential Amnesty Programme maintains that it continues to provide for 30, 000 ex-militants. As part of efforts to address the shortcomings of the programme, it is important that the government conduct a verification exercise to confirm the actual number of people that are registered in the programme. This verification exercise should include how many ex-militants who have died or moved elsewhere and those that are gainfully employed.

- **An assessment of the competence of ex-militants trained in the amnesty programme.**

The Presidential Amnesty Programme should conduct an assessment of the capacities of ex-militants trained through the programme. This assessment should aim to address the capacity gaps that may exist as a result of poor or incomplete training.

- **Niger Delta Labour Market Assessment**

PAP should conduct a labour market assessment in the Niger Delta. This assessment should aim to understand the demand side of the labour market in the region. The labour market assessment should include both the formal and informal sectors of the economy. The outcome of the assessment should be used to design an economic reintegration programme for ex-militants that are still in need of jobs.

- **Decentralisation and reform of the Presidential Amnesty Programme**

The Federal Government of Nigeria should start a decentralization process for the Presidential Amnesty Programme. This process should aim to transfer control of the amnesty programme to the local level where ex-militants reside. This is because this is the area where reintegration is expected to take place. This process should aim to add new elements or strengthen existing elements that will address current failures of the amnesty programme to produce the intended outcomes. This will also help government overcome the challenges that will emerge from termination of the programme when the objectives have not been achieved. At the local

level, the Nigerian government should aim to include the traditional rulers, chiefs, community development committees and associations and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that the objectives of the PAP are achieved at the community level where it is most needed.

#### - **Community Reconciliation and Local Peacebuilding**

The PAP should revisit the issue of community reconciliation and local peacebuilding in communities across the Niger Delta. This is needed to address hidden grievances held against ex-militants. It will also improve social cohesion in communities and create new entry points for sustainable peacebuilding in the Niger Delta.

#### - **Strategic Communications**

As one major militant leader pointed out, it is essential that **government gives accurate and timely information to the people of the Niger Delta**. This should explain any action taken or proposed, in a problem solving way rather than an inflammatory or threatening manner, **Government should call the leaders of the region - the traditional rulers, ethnic leaders, women, mainstream youth and ex-agitator leaders - to discuss and find solutions together**. Only then will the decisions be owned by the Niger Delta people themselves.

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## Appendix 1: List of Ex-Militant Leaders Interviewed

SN	PAP Beneficiaries	Location	Category	Interviewer
1	Mr. Benjamin	Cross River State	Leader	Nwaobi Austine Nwaze
2	Mr. Saviour Bassey Itabana	Akwa Ibom State	Leader(I)	Sam Osung
3	Egbele	Rivers State	Leader	Livingstone Membere
4	Chief Alhaji Mujahid Asari Dokubo	Rivers State	Leader	
5	Ateke Tom	Rivers State	Leader	Stephen Iyama
6	Nature Kieghe	Rivers State	Leader	Chief Lucky Duumaa
7	Solomon Ndigbara	Rivers State	Leader	
8	Kemesuote Jephthah	Bayelsa State	Leader	Tokpo Coronation & Utavie Jeremiah Wellington
9	Weris Teke Wellington	Bayelsa State	Leader	
10	Chief Godspower Gbenekama	Delta State	Leader	Tega Edeki
11	General Isreal	Delta/Abuja	Leader	
12	General Oshegu	Delta	Leader	Elizabeth Jarikre & Ken Omavuayeno
13	General Raymond Erharhadje	Delta State	Leader (R)	
14	General Ben Kperana	Delta State	Leader	
15	General Ben Okima	Delta State	Leader	
16	Chief Ajube (Shoot at Sight)	Ondo/Abuja	Leader	Emmanuel Etim
17	Donben Donyegha	Edo	Leader	Iro Aghedo
18	Paul Eris (Ogunboss)	Bayelsa	Leader	Dr. Judith Burdin Asuni held informal interviews
19	Africa Ukparasia	Bayelsa	Leader	Coronation Topko held informal interviews
20	Ebikabowei Victor Ben (Boyloaf)	Bayelsa	Leader	He did not respond to interviews sent to him.



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**Disclaimer**

This report was written for the Niger Delta Dialogue (NDD) funded by the European Union (EU). It reflects the views of the Authors, not those of the NDD or the EU.

# What The MILITANTS SAY

OUTCOMES OF  
THE PRESIDENTIAL  
AMNESTY PROGRAMME  
(PAP) IN OIL RICH  
NIGER DELTA

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August 2020