CREDIBILITY COMMITMENT AND PEACE BUILDING IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
The occurrence of conflict is predicated on several factors. While some are caused by the neglect of early warning mechanisms, others are as a result of subversive reactions to disproportionate distribution of resources and power; and or failed interventions to the conflict. The conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria has been primarily driven by grievances related to resource exploitation, environmental degradation, and socio-economic marginalization. Despite various intervention efforts aimed at addressing these issues and fostering peace, the region continues to experience periodic resurgences of violence. This study examines the critical factor of credibility commitment in the context of peacebuilding initiatives of the federal government of Nigeria and its influence on the resurgence of the conflict in the Niger Delta region. The method of data gathering is drawn from literature and biographic narratives of the actors and victims of the conflict. The study notes that credibility, whether perceived or actual, plays a vital role in the success of peacebuilding efforts in conflict societies. When stakeholders, including government authorities, international organizations, and local communities, perceive intervention programs as lacking credibility or sincerity, trust is eroded, and the likelihood of conflict resurgence increases. Furthermore, a lack of commitment to addressing underlying grievances and root causes of conflict, and implementing sustainable solutions, undermines the effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives.

Introduction

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria has been marred by decades of conflict, primarily driven by grievances related to resource exploitation, environmental degradation, and socio-economic marginalization. The conflicts in the Niger Delta have been very particular because of the presence of the natural resource of crude oil and gas which are very relevant to local and global politics and development. The much contested crude oil and gas from the Niger Delta account for about 95% of national budget, 90% of foreign earning exchange and about 80%

of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Nigeria. The Niger Delta has a tropical rain temperature and is lying between 40 N – 100 N of the equator at an elevation of less than 1000 meters. The average yearly rainfall is always substantial, albeit it varies by area, as sometimes the region experiences hot seasons due to the general global weather conditions. The River Niger covers an area of approximately 1,150,000km2 which takes its source from the Gulf of Guinea. Unfortunately, the Gulf of Guinea has been heavily affected by climate change conditions and global warming, leading to fresh water scarcityin the Gulf and exacerbating conflicts not just in the Upper Volta, but also in the south, particularly the herders-farmers conflict which has continued to ravage north central and some parts of southern Nigeria. The region is made up of marshlands, creeks, tributaries, rivers, seas and canals that flow into the Atlantic from River Niger.It is rich with presence of the variety of aquatic life and fresh water mangrove and vegetation, which provide an ambience of diversity and richness to Nigeria's economic and socio-cultural life.

Sincethe 1970s, Nigeria has earned not less than $300 billion from energy development from the Niger Delta upstream and downstream sectors. With over 40 million barrels of known oil reserves, it generates about 2.4 million barrels of oil each day, accounting for approximately 80% of government income and 95% of foreign exchange revenues, yet the region has remained underdeveloped and undeveloped. Because of the negative effects of oil discovery, the area has been engulfed in violent conflict for over four decades, owing to ecological dereliction, which has impaired the people's means of livelihood and survival. The area is reddened with scarcity, filth, and severe backwardness in the midst of abundance, a clear paradox of plenty and wants. The effects of oil leaks and gas flaring have resulted in the death of marine life and the destruction of farmlands (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2017). This has constrained the people's lives, deepened the struggle for equitable resource governance and intensified the agitation for better living conditions.

Conceptual Insights

Credibility Commitment

The concept of credible commitment is well documented in literature (Keohane, 1989; Moravcsik, 1991; Rodrik, 1991; North, 1993; Sen, 2015). It is a concept that is very critical to both the understanding of the transformation of war-torn societies within the context of balance of power and in terms of genuine commitment on third parties to conflict situations. Yet, the concept remains one of the least explored or interrogated in the study of contemporary arms struggle and peace building globally. None of what recently emerged as the major works on armed struggle especially since post amnesty era in the Niger Delta, has considered the concept of credibility important enough to be an analytical tool. The theoretical significance of this concept derives from the insights it offers in understanding the fundamental causes of persistence of armed conflict and particularly in the Niger Delta; and more so the evidence it provides regarding underdevelopment of the region and resurgence of conflict. For further clarification on the concept of credibility commitment, Dotsey (2008) has provided that:

> *Credibility commitment means delivering, in any particular situation, on past promises. In other words, the policymaker unequivocally will follow through on a promise made about future actions (p. 1).*

In another perspective, Shepsle (1991) maintains that:

> *A commitment is credible in either of two senses, the motivational or the imperative. A commitment is motivationally credible if the players continue to want to honor the commitment at the time of performance. In this case it is incentive compatible and hence self-enforcing. It is credible in the imperative sense if the player cannot act otherwise because performance is coerced or discretion is disabled (p.247).*

Following from Shepsle's assertion, a credibility commitment becomes possible where there is incentive, but parties are willing to renege of credibility commitment where the incentives favor one party at the disadvantage of the other. The point of emphasis here is that institutional arrangements enable the prospects of allowing the parties to make credible

commitment; this will disable the exercise of discretionary authority. Discretionary authority only allows parties to change their mind and renege on a previously promised commitment and this result in very troubled and complicated consequences. Thus, credibility commitment is enhanced by constitutional or institutional status; in this instance it is difficult for parties to revise the status and renege on their credibility commitment stance, thus achieving a broader welfare and social improvement.

Approaching this concept from a political economy perspective, effective state-business relation requires a credible commitment from the government to policies, agreements, or other arrangements, which can be obtained through both formal and informal institutions. Formal institutions include properly enforced laws that prohibit the expropriation of private property without just cause, and well-functioning courts that protect firms if the state engages in predatory behaviour. Informal institutions are personalised relationships between the agents of the state and the business sector that are repeated over time. Investment choices that turn out to be less profitable than expected may not be fully recovered. Therefore, to encourage entrepreneurs to choose to invest in and produce goods, the state must pledge that it will not alter its policies or break agreements; this is because investors are highly likely to lose faith in the state in the future, if it does not keep its declarations and promises, which would have a negative impact on investment (Sen, 2015).

Credibility commitment if therefore fundamental to peacebuilding processes. Credibility, whether perceived or actual, plays a vital role in the success of peacebuilding efforts in conflict societies. When stakeholders, including government authorities, international organizations, and local communities, perceive intervention programs or any government programme as lacking credibility or sincerity, trust is eroded, and the likelihood of severing relationship increases.

Conflict Resurgence

Conflict resurgence or reoccurrence have become a major characteristic of emerging societies. Scholarly findings reveal that it is more likely that countries that have experienced intrastate conflict and violence will experience it in the future. The political situation in post-conflict states and societies is extremely volatile. After the civil war, the previously warring internal parties continue to live together in the same country. This portends a risk of a return to conflict, if one party feels its needs have not been adequately met. Rwanda, Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Sierra Leone, East Timor, Sri Linka, Liberia and South Sudan are some of the examples of countries that have experienced recurring intrastate conflict, in which violence broke out repeatedly over time (Tom, 2017).

Sufficient evidences in literature reveal that weak, corrupt, fragile and failed States especially in resource rich regions are some of the causes of resurgence or reoccurrence of conflict (Langer and Brown, 2016; Karldor, et. al, 2007). Paradoxically, the consequence of the belief that territory can be militarily controlled and governments forcibly re-established in conflict-ridden oil-exporting countries is not greater control over oil supplies or prices but greater political and economic instability. This confirms the fact that the greater powers or nation states attempt to control access to oil militarily, by building fortresses around oil enclaves or placing soldiers along pipelines, the greater the insecurity of supply.

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria has witnessed several episodes of conflict resurgence. After the Presidential Amnesty Programme of late President Umaru Musa Yar'dua's administration 2009, which was seen as lofty and pragmatic with all the huge financial involvement, one would expect that such programme would elicit sustainable peace in the region. However, the outcome were spates of resurgence of militant activities between 2016 and 2020 in the region, with new militant formations such as the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), Joint Niger Delta Liberation Force (JNDLF) and the Niger Delta Greenland Justice Mandate.This raised critical questions about the efficacy of the amnesty programme. The reasons for the resumption of militant activities were the lack of intentionality and poor implementation of the amnesty programme, which constituted the aggrieved fragmentation and new social movements for justice in the region, coupled with the worsened effect of underdevelopment of key infrastructure and provision of essential services (Amadi andOchuko, 2021).

Peacebuilding

There are many views about peacebuilding in literature. This is so because scholars at one point or the other, addressed the concept from different standpoint owing to their experiences, ideology and research findings. Since the end of the cold war, peacebuilding has become part of peace research lexicon. Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 1992 *An Agenda for Peace*, provided for what seemed a blue print for maintaining global peace. It prescribed responsibilities and responses for the United Nations and the international community in dealing with contemporary conflicts. The proposal highlighted four major areas of activity: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and post-conflict peacebuilding. His framework suggests that at different times and in diverse contexts, a variety of sequential response mechanisms and functions are needed to promote the resolution of conflict and sustenance of peace.

Boutros-Ghali's submission is somewhat narrow. This is because it prescribes a statist approach to peacebuilding. The reason for Boutros-Ghali report is not unconnected with the fact that the United Nations (UN) was about the only global institution with the capacity and responsibility to promote world peace especially after the two world wars and the cold war. Hence the UN's traditional peacekeeping approach primarily sought to minimize interstate conflict through monitoring ceasefires between hostile states, it could not match the emerging post-Cold War peace and security challenges in low-income countries.

A more pragmatic view of peacebuilding was provided by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2009) thus:

> *Peacebuilding comprises the identification and support of measures needed for transformation toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships and structures of governance, in order to avoid a relapse into conflict. The four dimensions of peacebuilding emphasized here are: socio-economic development, good governance, reform of justice and security institutions, and the culture of justice, truth and reconciliation (p. 7).*

The view provided by UNEP is based on the alarming rate of violent intrastate wars that had claimed more lives. This needed a 'people-centered' approach as against the statist approach which only maintained the traditional peacekeeping approach, emphasizing the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. The 'people-centered' approach puts people at the center of everything. This enables them (men, women and children) all over the world to make their lives better (Tom, 2017). This new approach embraced the protection of communities and individuals from internal violence (Annan, 2000). In addition, peacebuilding states the need to develop conflict prevention strategies that not only address the symptoms of violent conflicts but also their sources.

According to Lederach, (1997):

> *Peacebuilding is understood as a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships. The term thus involves a wide range of activities and functions that both precede and follow formal peace accords (p.20).*

Peacebuilding involves transforming the social and political environment that nurtures social inequalities, engenders historical grievances and fosters combative interactions, into more tolerable gestures that create social and communal living. More so, post-conflict peacebuilding centers on providing the necessary support for sustained peace processes such as reintegration and resettlement, electoral assistance, repairing of damage human relationships, justice for human rights violations and healing of physical and psychological traumas (Osah, 2014). This view is illustrated in what Reychler (2015) calls the peacebuilding pentagon which is illustrated below.

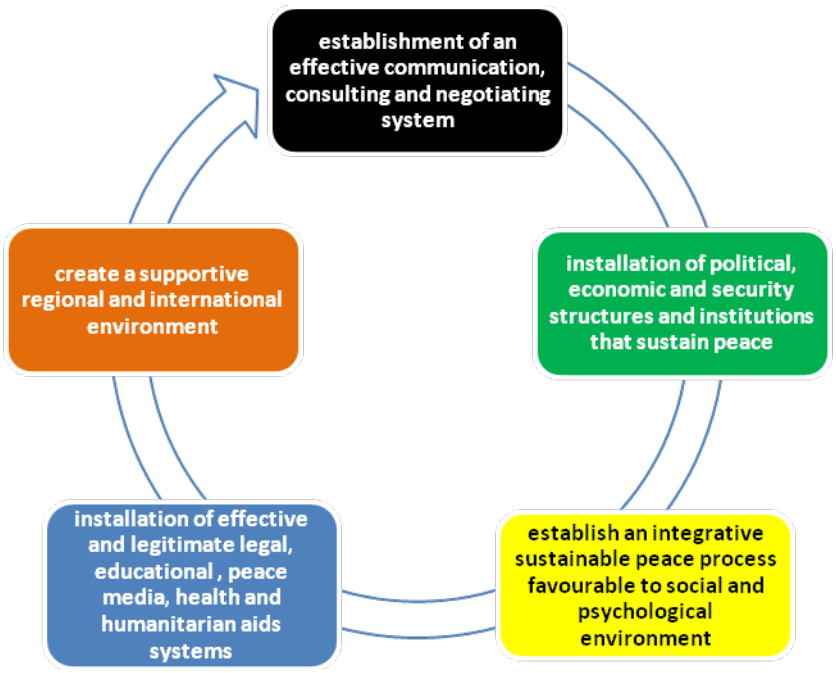


Figure 1.1: Peace Building Pentagon

Source: *Authors (2024); adapted from Reychler (2015)*

The setting up of all these peacebuilding structures is necessary and interconnecting. The lagging of one or more can seriously obstruct the peacebuilding process. This requires a critical mass of peacebuilding leadership at different levels – elite, middle and grassroots. This may require the development of social, political and economic structures that produce tolerance, equity, equality and justice. The understanding is that these levels of leadership will produce a community-based, process-oriented, bottom-top approach that will manage, resolve and reconcile inter-group conflicts and socio-political rivalries and the management of post-conflict economic development (Osah, 2014; Reychler, 2015; Laderach, 1997).

The Niger Delta Conflict: Some Historical Path

The Niger Delta oil conflict is not a recent one. Several authors and researchers have documented that the oil conflict dates back several centuries (Alagoa, 2005; Dike, 1956; Osah, Ogundiwin&Eti, 2017). Generally, the Niger Delta is restive. This restiveness is linked to the stark asymmetry in the abundance of natural resources and underdevelopment in the region. The Niger Delta people had wanted their own self-governing state under Nigeria's central government for a very long time, but the obstacles were practically enormous. From the time when Nigeria was governed by colonial authorities until the period of self-rule, when it was broken up into three or four powerful regional administrations, controlled by majority groups under a weak federal center under the 1946 Richards' constitution, the people had complained about the region's lack of progress. Rather than being treated as a single entity, the region was split into two, with one portion being under the jurisdiction of the Western region (Midwest state) and the other under the Eastern region. In 1957, the delta people sent delegations to the London Constitutional Conference, which marked the beginning of the quest for self-determination. As a result, the Henry Willinks Commission was established in 1958 to look at minority groups' worries and ways to soothe them. The Commission found that the area was underdeveloped, backward, and uncared for. The result was the creation of the Niger Delta Special Area and the Niger Delta

Development Board (NDDB) (Ukiwo, 2010; Willink, 1958).

With the creation of the NDDB, the oil producing states were entitled to 50% of the profits derived from mining royalties and rents. However, when oils became the lifeblood of Nigeria's economy certain repulsive laws were passed to undermine the fiscal framework. Such laws included the Petroleum Control Degrees of 1967; the Oil in Navigable Waters Act of 1968; Mineral Oil (Safety) Regulations Law No 45 of 1968; Petroleum Act of 1968; Oil Terminal Dues of 1969; Land Use Act of 1978; Exclusive Economic Zone Act of 1978; Land Title Vesting Decree of 1993 and the National Inland Waterways Authority Decree of 1997 and several more that had granted the whole population of the Nigerian state the possession and management of all lands in, under, or upon them (Osah and Alao, 2014).The issue got worse when the derivation formula was reduced to 1% in the 1980s, not until the Olusegun Obasanjo's government in 1999 when it rose to 13%. The region gradually became cut off from the control of the oil resources. Oil prospecting licenses are still not being distributed to the locals. Yet all too frequently, the government's control over resources and the income that results from these resources coexists with widespread corruption, a climate of lawlessness, irresponsibility and intolerance, a lack of strong laws, and an unequal distribution of public funds (Nna-Ntete, 2001; Sogwe, 1997).

These government actions, combined with frustration, alienation, and poverty, culminated into attempts to forcibly assert regional autonomy for the Niger Delta region. Several non-violent methods were adopted to assuage the federal government about the critical plight of the region. These included protests, petitions, workshops, conventions, position papers, and lobbying.They also drafted documents such as the Ogoni Bill of Rights (1990); Charter of Demands of the Ogbia People (1992); Kaiama Declaration (1998); Akalaka Declaration (1999); Warri Accord (1999); Ikwerre Rescue Charter (1999); Oron Bill of Rights (1999) and Niger Delta Peoples' Compact (2008) to demonstrate the extreme of their anger (Osaghae, Ikelegbe, Olarinmoyeand Okhomina, 2011; Francis, LaPin&Rossiaco, 2011).

The modest, non-violent approach of agitation soon gave way to very fierce and brutal approaches that were motivated by the need address the developmental worries of environmental pollution and degradation such as oil spill, gas flaring and macro-economic issues such as unemployment, hunger, poverty and other forms in the region. These accounts for the protracted nature of the agitation in the region; resulting in the formation of militant groups with significant once as Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities (FNDIC); Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF); Niger Delta Strike Force (NDSF); Niger Delta Vigilantes Services (NDVS); People's Liberation Force (PLF); and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). These groups used various tactics, including attacks on military installations, pipeline vandalism, subversions, bombings, attacks on oil facilities, illegally refining and selling crude oil, kidnapping and holding hostages for ransom, piracy, armed robbery, extortion, drug trafficking as *modus operandi* of agitation (Aaron and George, 2010; Asuni, 2009; Osaghae, Ikelegbe, Olarinmoyeand Okhomina, 2011; Campbell, 2010; Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2010; Ibeanu and Momoh 2008).

Successive Nigerian governments attempted several interventionist programmes to resolve the Niger Delta conundrum. Some of these efforts involved military strategy, while others were non-military. Military intervention in conflict situations is usually attended by terror against civilians and is characterized by death and destruction of property in order to achieve a ceasefire. Empirical evidence suggests that when military troops are deployed to conflict zones, the attendant consequences are weighty. For instance, Oyewole, Adegboye and Durosinmi (2018) maintain that "state security agencies constitute a veritable threat to the security of the citizens of Nigeria. More often, rather than restore peace and order, they exacerbate crises, ramping up social and political tensions." The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is an evidence of this state-sponsored terror on citizens. The Nigerian state deployed security forces, which have records of campaigns of terror against the people of the Niger Delta, through a series of operations of various military task forces. The *Odi* massacre in November 1999 in Bayelsa state exemplifies this argument were about 2000 villagers dead, while 50,000 people were displaced. The impact of military operations in the Niger Delta was terrifically counterproductive (Oluyemi, 2020).

Non-military interventions in times of conflict well up to conflict transformation and peacebuilding. Non-military or humanitarian intervention makes a distinction between the civil and military parties engaging in the actions. It lays the foundation for peacebuilding by creating a safer environment where people can think about things other than their immediate survival. Therefore, the purpose of humanitarian intervention is not to defend or advance civil or political rights, but to safeguard essential human rights in dire situations. The argument here is related with the moral duty to intervene in order to protect the civilians from violation of their human rights, mass killing and genocide (Temelkovska-Anevska, 2020). Following from this, the federal government of Nigeria initiated and implemented several humanitarian interventions, with the most recent being the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) ofUmaru Musa Yar'dua's administration. However, these interventions were poorly implemented; hence the resurgence of conflict and the elusiveness of sustainable peace in the region.

Linking the Discourse of Credibility Commitment to Peacebuilding in the Region

Conflict resurgence in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta region has been on the rise particularly after the Presidential Amnesty Programme. This has been linked to the non-credible commitment on the part of warring parties for peacebuilding. Flores and Irfan (2011), contend that the central obstacle to post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery is the inability of former warring parties to commit credibly to peaceful contestation of political and economic power. This follows from a historically unique insight into the federal government's passive response to socio-economic challenges facing the Niger Delta region. It is such lack of intentionality that has created the increasing aggrieved fragments and social movements that constitute crucial threat to the State in the form of post amnesty combatants. This suggests that the core ideals of the federal government's amnesty programme as a mechanism for peacebuilding are not functioning. This is evident in the wave of criminal activities by new militant formations from the creeks to the upland areas and even to the seat of government. The poorly coordinated implementation of the amnesty programme points to its failure to secure sustainable peace within the Niger Delta. The table below indicates the resurgence of conflict in the region after the implementation of the PAP in 2009.

S/N	Date	State	Community	Type of violence	Death /Casualties/Degree of Destruction
1	01/06/2016	Delta	Warri	Armed clash	6 Deaths
2	02/06/2016	Bayelsa	Yenegoa	Violent attack on oil Installation by Niger Delta Avengers	Explosion
3	04/07/2016	Delta	Abiteye	Violent attack on oil Installation by Niger Delta Avengers	Explosion
4	18/05/2016	Rivers	Rumukwachi	Abduction	Disappearance
5	07/06/2016	Delta	Koko	Violent attack on oil Installation by Niger Delta Avengers	Explosion

6	10/6/2016	Bayelsa	Brass	Violent attack on oil Installation by Niger Delta Avengers	Explosion
7	09/07/2017	Rivers	Isiokpo	Abduction	Disappearance
8	09/07/2017	Bayelsa	Ogbia	Armed clash	1 Death, 2 Injured
9	26/12/2017	Rivers	Emuoha	Abduction	Disappearance
10	17/09/2018	Rivers	Mbiama	Ex-militants protest over unpaid benefits from amnesty programme	
11	29/09/2018	Delta	Ndoni	Armed clash/abduction	
12	27/10/2018	Rivers	Bonny	Abduction of foreign expatriates	Disappearance
13	23/12/2018	Rivers	Rumuepirikom	Abduction	Disappearance
14	01/08/2019	Delta	Sapele	Protest at Forte Oil company over non-payment of community entitlements	
15	03/06/2019	Delta	Warri	Protest over Heritage Energy Company's neglect of community development	
16	03/12/2019	Rivers	Bonny	Abduction of Foreign expatriates	
17	04/11/2019	Delta	Warri	Armed attack	3 Deaths
18	05/07/2019	Delta	Warri	Protest over company employment	
19	16/06/2019	Rivers	Tai/Goi	Armed clash over oil theft	4 Deaths
20	25/06/2019	Rivers	Port Harcourt	Protest over resumption of oil production by Shell	

				company	
21	07/05/2019	Bayelsa	Nembe	Protest over company's outsourcing of local contracts	
22	07/06/2019	Delta	Polobubo	Protest over government's failure to respond to company's neglect	
23	07/10/2019	Rivers	Andoni/Ngo	Abduction	Disappearance
24	22/07/2019	Bayelsa	Azagbene-Zion	Armed clash	1 Abduction
25	08/10/2019	Delta	Ole	Protest over Agip company's lack of community development	
26	09/10/2019	Rivers	Bodo	Women protest over road construction	
27	25/11/2019	Rivers	Port Harcourt	Ex-militants protest over non-payment of allowance of PAP	
28	19/12/2019	Delta	BulouOzobo	Women protest over Shell company neglect	
29	29/12/2019	Delta	Umusadege	Protest over company non-commitment to MOU	
30	30/12/2019	Delta	Ikpide-Irri	Youth Protest over poor quality of roads	
32	02/01/2020	Bayelsa	Ogbia/Otuasiga	Community clash	1 Death
33	02/12/2020	Rivers	Okehi	Youth Protest	
34	16/02/2020	Bayelsa	Letugbene	Attack on oil Installation	6 Deaths
35	16/02/2020	Bayelsa	Letugbene	Armed clash	Houses destroyed

36	03/02/2020	Rivers	Amaku-Mba, Igbodo, Agbalu	Cult clash	3 Deaths
37	03/03/2020	Delta	Udu	Armed clash	3 Deaths
38	03/06/2020	Rivers	Degema	Abduction	
39	20/03/2020	Bayelsa	Ezeotu	Armed clash	2 Deaths
40	26/05/2020	Rivers	Degema/Bakana	Armed clash	
41	16/06/2020	Rivers	Degema	Armed Clash	4 Deaths
42	28/07/2020	Delta	Asaba	Protest over poor governance	
43	08/09/2020	Delta	Ugborodo	Women Protest	
44	09/05/2020	Delta	Okuoke	Armed clash/Abduction	2 Deaths/injuries sustained
45	09/05/2020	Bayelsa	Yenegoa	Abduction	
46	19/09/2020	Rivers	Okarki	Armed Clash	Sustained injuries and property damage
47	26/09/2020	Delta	IsseleMkpitime	Abduction	Disappearance
48	15/10/2020	Bayelsa	Egbemo-Angalabiri	Abduction	Disappearance
49	15/10/2020	Rivers	Bonny	Abduction	Disappearance
50	28/10/2020	Bayelsa	Yenegoa	Youth Protest	
51	12/05/2020	Rivers	Arugbanama	Armed clash	2 Deaths/weapons seized
52	12/09/2020	Delta	Ugheli	Abduction	Disappearance
53	12/10/2020	Delta	Evwreni	Communal Clash	2 deaths and 3 houses destroyed
54	12/10/2020	Rivers	Degema	Abduction	Disappearance

Table 1.1: Resurgence of Violence in the Niger Delta from 2016 – 2020

Source: *Compiled by Authors (2024)*

This study has identified fiveareas in which the federal government of Nigeria has not shown credible commitment in the Niger Delta and which has contributed to the resurgence of conflict and endangering peacebuilding in the region.

1. Credibility commitment to the socio-economic realities of the region as well as the transformation of ex-militants. The socio-economic realities in the NDR has put the region in disarray and deprived the people from leading meaningful lives. This is evident in the deep seated level of poverty and squalor in the local communities, environmental pollution, lack of key essentials basic necessities such as healthcare and hygiene, education, electricity, portable drinking and the exclusion of the local communities from the governance of oil production in the region.

2. Credibilitycommitment to ecological transformation. Following the United Nation Environmental Programme (UNEP) report released in 2011 on the environmental degradation of Ogoni land, which stated that it will take 25 to 50 years to effectively clean up Ogoni land. The clean-up has largely remained politicized as no meaningful efforts have been made since the release of the report. Suffice to say that Ogoni land is not the only land affected by environmental degradation. There are several other communities in the Niger Delta that is affected by ecological filth.

3. Credibilitycommitment to institutionalisation. The federal government's inclination towards monetary incentives rather than institutional approach in resolving the Niger Delta conflict was an encumbrance to the successfulrehabilitation and reintegration of ex-militants. In conflict situations, most actors develop vested interests in the conflict because of the incentives of violence. Owing to such 'spoils', conflict entrepreneurs ensure that their wartime benefits are sustained even in peacetime and government benefits from the spoils most times. This attitude makes the transition from conflict to peace difficult; and pre-disposes the state to post-conflict risks, including resurgence into violence (Reno, 2000; Collier and Hoeffler 2008).

4. Credibility commitment to fiscal revenue allocation. The long standing federal government'sharmonization of revenue allocation formula has remained problematic. The recommendations by the LedumMitee technical committee in 2008 to increase the oil revenue percentage from 13 percent to 25 percent; establish a regulatory framework that will compel oil multinational companies to have insurance bond that will enable the enforcement of critical environment laws and make them a national priority; and expose fraudulent environmental clean-up of oil spills and prosecute operators; end gas flaring; have remained a mirage and precursors to the resurgence of the conflict in the region.

5. Credible commitment to political processes. Governments elected through credible democratic political process signals a deeper commitment to policy promises to internal and external audiences upon whom they depend for allegiance, investment and development. This further strengthenspolitical institutions and other institutions of the states and stabilizes policy processes. It further increasesthe credibility ratio of leaders to make and fulfill promises because the steeper sanctions that will spring up from the citizens if they renege on their commitment are dire. Unfortunately, since 1999, the political processes leading up to elections and governance in Nigeria have been bereft of any credible commitment, thus compounding peacebuilding efforts in the NDR.

Conclusion and Annotations

Solving the credibility commitment problem in post-conflict societies requires a focus on policy priorities and strengthening political structures and institutions. In doing this, attention should be concentrated on domestic political solutions. The process of post-conflict reconstruction inevitably depends on the reformation of existing social, political, and economic institutions. Since internal conflicts are political in nature, they require political solutions also. These conflicts arise because a

party to the conflict feels ill-fated in the conduct of affairs and therefore resorts to violence as a way of ventilating its grievance. The resort to violence suggests that the existing political structures and institutions are weak and that parties to the conflict cannot trust such structures as means of resolving issue and confrontations. Therefore, the federal government should strengthen its existing political structures and institutions and or create resilient ones and rely on their capacity to deliver on priority policy areas. Reliance on institutions simplifies the efforts of government in exercising governance. It must prioritise peacebuilding in the Niger Delta region, not just to enhance foreign earnings through crude oil, but protect lives and property.

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