

## WARRI CRISES: CAUSES AND IMPACT ON THE OIL INDUSTRY IN THE NIGER DELTA

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### **Abstract**

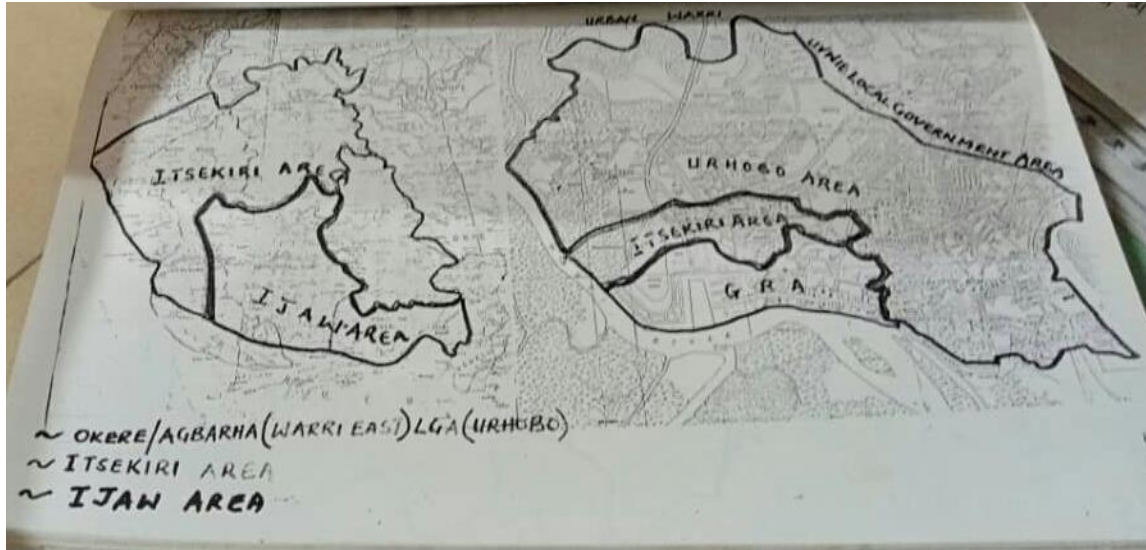
*The destructive nature of the Warri crises and its impact on the socio-economic lives of the people of the State have been one too many, especially establishing a new form of attitude of the people towards organising themselves. This is seen from the issues surrounding the cause of the crises, particularly accumulation of arms and ammunition through proceeds of illegal bunkering and pipeline vandalism among communities living within the riverine and interior areas. Thus, the study argues that underdevelopment, failure of OMPADEC to deliver on its mandate, and the mode of compensation of oil companies in these communities are central to the Warri crises, although they were termed underlying causes. For instance, the collapse of the non-oil sector and, also, government inability to develop the area necessitated a feeling of neglect by the people thus causing disaffection and distrust among ethnic groups. The study observes that in the course of the 1997 crisis, the opposing groups engulfed in brawl and their members were targeted, while the other crises; 2001 and 2003, oil companies became subject of attacks from the Ijaw group who felt marginalised from oil activities in the area. The study concludes that militancy, youth restiveness, inter-communal and intra-communal violent conflicts in Delta State are tied to the various crises in Warri, as it became a norm for communities to amass weapons in protection against perceived threats from other communities. The study employs primary and secondary sources of data and adopts both qualitative and descriptive methods of historical research in its analysis.*

### **Introduction:**

The Warri area lies between latitude 5°31' North and longitude 5°5' and 5°45' East of the Greenwich Meridian. The area covers three Local Government Areas: Warri North, South and South-West L.G.As and other suburbs such as Uvwie and Udu L.G.As. The major ethnic groups in Warri are: Urhobo, Itsekiri and Ijaw ethnic nationalities. These groups are located in Delta State of Nigeria. The area has dual locations peculiar to its geographical arrangement: riverine and the hinterland, and these are replicated in its economic values. Also, they formed the basis of their choice of occupation, articles of

trade and their economic relations as well as the social interactions in the respective ethnic groups<sup>1</sup> in the Warri area. However, over the years these ethnic groups, between 1997, 2001 and 2003, have been a subject of ethnic squabbles, leading to lost of lives and destruction of properties.

## Introduction



Source: Delta State Government House, Asaba, 2020.

## An Overview of the Warri Crises

The Warri crisis started in 1997 between the Ijaw and the Itsekiri, and it was also fought within the stretch of 1999, 2001 and 2003. The Warri crisis of 1997 arose from the planned relocation of the Headquarters of the Warri South West Local Government Area from its already planned Ogbe-Ijoh, a town dominated by the Ijaw ethnic group to Ogidigben, a community dominated by the Itsekiri ethnic group<sup>2</sup>. The 1997 crisis arose mainly in the process of Local Government reforms and creation by the Abacha led

<sup>1</sup> Delta State Government, *Delta State General Economic Atlas*, Effurun: Delta Geosciences Company Limited, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Office of the Military Administrator, "Address by His Excellency, Colonel John David Dungs, on the Occasion of the Inauguration of the Elders Forum at the Unity Hall", Government House, Asaba on Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> December, 1997, p. vi; Delta State, "Report of the Delta State Elders' Forum on the Warri Crisis between March and May 1997", *Main Report, Vol. 1*; February 1998, p. 3; Office of the Governor, "An Address by His Excellency, Chief Jmes Onanefe Ibori, the Governor of Delta State to the Delta State House of Assembly on the Warri Crises", Asaba: Government House; August 28, 2003; I.E. Sagay, "Strategies for Harmonious Co-Existence between the Itsekiri and Sister Nations in Delta State", *Lecture Delivered in Commemoration of the Alpha May Club at the Island Club Lagos*; Friday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2002, p. 12.

Federal Military Government without recourse to the understanding of the peculiarities of the Warri situation<sup>3</sup>. The Warri crises were fought in triangular ways; Ijaw fought with the Itsekiri, while the Itsekiri with Urhobo and Ijaw and Urhobo. The Niger Delta agitation, especially in Delta State, was an offshoot of the Warri Crisis<sup>4</sup>. It also made the people to get involved in bunkering unchecked, hence, ushering a new criminality.

The Itsekiri/Urhobo conflict is the problem of Warri metropolis and the three Itsekiri riverine areas, namely; Ode-Itsekiri, Obodo and Ubeji, that together constitute the present Warri South L.G.A. The issue involved the following:

- Ownership of Land;
- Over Lordship of the Olu of Warri; and
- Alleged political marginalization of the Urhobo and Ijaw in the L.G.A.<sup>5</sup>

### **Underlying Cause of the Conflict**

Even though the crisis was an offshoot of the squabbles between the Ijaws and Itsekiri over the relocation of Local Government Council's Headquarters from Ogbe-Ijo to Ogidigben, the crisis was an amalgam of other related issues that are linked with the activities of the oil companies in Warri and its environs. It has been argued that the proceeds of crude oil in the Warri area have not had a true reflection of the money made in the cause of these activities, and the Federal Government did not show enough commitment to ensure the development of most of the oil producing communities. Thus, the following may be termed as underlying causes of the Warri Crises

### **Underdevelopment and Unemployment**

An area that may be observed in the Warri area is the lack of development and employment of youth in the Warri metropolis, such that youths that are gainfully employed may hardly ignore the temptation to go into rampage. Thus, over the years the area was claimed to suffer neglect in terms of industrial development, good or motorable roads, constant electricity power supply, potable pipe borne water and other infrastructural development that may have contributed to the growth and development of the area<sup>6</sup>. The unemployed youth became an instrument of destabilization into the

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<sup>3</sup> Office of the Governor, "An Address by His Excellency, Chief Jmes Onanefe Ibori, the Governor of Delta State to the Delta State House of Assembly on the Warri Crises"... 2005, pp. 11-12.

<sup>4</sup> Chief Barr. Edward Ekpoko, A Renown Lawyer and Activist, Chief of the Warri Kingdom, Warri, 63, 11/01/2020.

<sup>5</sup> Delta State, "Report of the Delta State Elders' Forum on the Warri Crisis between March and May 1997", *Main Report, Vol. 1*; February 1998, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Delta State, "Report of the Delta State Elders' Forum on the Warri Crisis between March and May 1997", *Main Report, Vol. 2*; February 1998, p. 25.

hands of people who were bent on causing trouble on ethnic grounds or on the basis of perceived grievances against oil companies operating in the area<sup>7</sup>.

Another dimension of underdevelopment was the woeful neglect of industries and infrastructural projects, which the Federal Government embarked upon in the area and most of which were later abandoned. For instance, the projects neglected in the State include; Delta Steel Company, Aladja, and the Salt Factory at Oghara and the Benin Warri dual carriage expressway, while other abandoned projects are the E.P.Z at Koko, the distillery at Ojobo, Koko-Ogheye-Lekki Road, Clinker Cement Factory at Koko and Bomadi-Ojobo-Obotebe Road<sup>8</sup>. Although the establishment of the Petroleum (Special) Trust Fund in 1995<sup>9</sup> raised hopes of the people, it nonetheless settled the basic issues confronting the people, i.e. failing to meet the infrastructural deficit in Niger Delta in general and Delta State in particular. This had further left the Warri area with lacks of good network of roads, waterways and other necessary infrastructural development that may engage youth in the area. It is therefore strongly suggested that the Federal Government and its Agencies as well as the State Government should as a matter of deliberate policy, focus development projects and programmes in the area to absorb the teeming population of unemployed youths<sup>10</sup>.

### **The Failure of OMPADEC to deliver on its Mandate Area**

The major reason for establishment of the Commission was evolving corporate social responsibility (CSR) to oil producing communities and participating on meaningful development that may help in engaging the youth within the communities and urban areas in the State. OMPADEC failed to meet its mandate, especially in developing the crude environment of the communities playing host to most of the oil infrastructures. Hence, creating a state of imbalance that necessitated the 1997 Warri Crisis, and the youths became ready tools for conflict entrepreneurs in the State. The concern and disappointment of the people over the Commission's failure was ably described by the then Military Administrator of Delta State, Colonel John David Dungs when he stated

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<sup>7</sup> Delta State, "Report of the Delta State Elders' Forum on the Warri Crisis between March and May 1997", *Main Report, Vol. 2*; February 1998, p. 26.

<sup>8</sup> Interviews with Professor D. Omoweh, Professor, Admiralty University and Author, Shell Petroleum Development Company: The State and Underdevelopment of Nigeria's Niger Delta, Asaba, 65, 08/12/2019; Prof. S.O Aghalino, Professor, University of Illorin and Board Chairman, College of Education Warri, Warri, 67, 08/12/2019; Pastor Hon. Mark John Ighwasi, Senior Special Assistance to the Delta State Government and a Clergyman, 66, Sapele, 25/01/2020.

<sup>9</sup> Petroleum (Special) Trust Fund, "Organisational Structure and Management Information Systems". *Inception Report, Vol. 1*, August 1995, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Delta State, "Report of the Delta State Elders' Forum on the Warri Crisis between March and May 1997", *Main Report, Vol. 2*; February 1998, p. 27.

that, “dismal performance of OMPADEC was characterized by gross inefficiency and mismanagement of fund”<sup>11</sup>.

### **Compensation from Oil Companies**

It is an established fact in the Nigeria’s Niger Delta, that oil producing communities usually permanently lose their arable lands to the compulsory acquisition by oil companies through oil exploration, construction of a welter of pipelines across their territory, thus, rendering vast area of ancestral land and farm lands permanently inaccessible to them, coupled with pollution, environmental hazards and the devastation of socio-economic life and culture of the people. Also, the activity of oil companies and the nature of its operation rendered vast areas of community lands inhabitable, uncultivable, infertile and dangerous to the lives of the people of communities in Delta State<sup>12</sup>. In the absence to the right of the people to manage and control the exploitation of the resources in their lands, the only relief available for the people is monetary compensation.

Compensation from oil companies in Warri and its environs has become a veritable source of the Warri Crisis. The oil producing communities often fight over these paltry some of money given as compensation to families or communities that may have lost its land to oil companies<sup>13</sup>. These situations are created through those who placed themselves before the companies as representatives of the communities or are nominated by the communities to represent them but ended up representing their personal interests<sup>14</sup>. Thus, assistance meant for the communities are inequitably distributed or inadequately accounted for. In most communities, the most appropriate way by which oil companies channel assistance are mainly through the Presidential General of communities, while in the case of the Itsekiris, the Olu of Warri (the

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<sup>11</sup> Office of the Military Administrator, “Address by His Excellency, Colonel John David Dungs, Military Administrator of Delta State on the Occasion of the Meeting of Traditional Rulers of Oil Mineral Production Communities of Nigeria (TROMP) at Petroleum Training Institute Conference Center, Effurun”, Asaba: Government House; Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> July, 1998, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> I.E. Sagay, “Strategies for Harmonious Co-Existence between the Itsekiri and Sister Nations in Delta State”, *Lecture Delivered in Commemoration of the Alpha May Club at the Island Club Lagos*; Friday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2002, p. 16.

<sup>13</sup> I.E. Sagay, “Strategies for Harmonious Co-Existence between the Itsekiri and Sister Nations in Delta State”... 2002, p. 16.

<sup>14</sup> Delta State, “Report of the Delta State Elders’ Forum on the Warri Crisis between March and May 1997”, *Main Report, Vol. 2*; February 1998, p. 27.

Paramount Ruler of Warri Kingdom) or his nominee represent the Itsekiri communities<sup>15</sup>.

### **Impact of the Warri Crises**

The Warri crises were fought in triangular fashion, such that the Ijaw fought with the Itsekiri in 1997, while the Itsekiri with Urhobo 2000, and the Ijaw and Urhobo around 2003, and this stretched of inter-ethnic conflicts can be termed a tripartite crises. The crises caused loss of lives and the destruction of properties within the various ethnic groups. Apart from the loss of lives the crises had been responsible for the proliferation of arms and ammunitions in the State. According to the Delta State Governor Chief James Onanefe Ibori, “it is an open secret that the serious problem now referred to, as “Warri Crises” (1997-2003) was one of such problems, which heralded the inauguration of the present civilian administration in Delta State”<sup>16</sup>. When the administrative problem that led to the Warri Crisis was resolved, other security issues such as sea piracy, hostage-taking, vandalism of oil installations, inter- and intra-state boundary disputes, youth restiveness and proliferation of illegal weapons reared up their heads<sup>17</sup> and became a major problem the State contended with at the advent of democracy.

### **Proliferation of Firearms**

The use of sophisticated weapons by these groups say a lot about the proliferation of heavy weapons in the Warri area in particular and Delta State in general. It was at this extent that Delta State Director of Security<sup>18</sup>, Department of State Services, claimed that arms proliferation was the root cause of recurrent inter-ethnic, inter/intra-communal clashes and sundry vices witnessed in the State<sup>19</sup>. There had been competition among ethnic groups in Delta State, particularly the Itskeiri, Ijaw and Urhobo to acquire and

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<sup>15</sup> Delta State, “Report of the Delta State Elders’ Forum on the Warri Crisis between March and May 1997”, *Main Report, Vol. 2*; February 1998, p. 27.

<sup>16</sup> Office of the Governor, “Address by his Excellency, Chief James Onanefe Ibori, Governor of Delta State during a Courtesy Visit by the Subcommittee of the Presidential Special Security Committee at the Ex-Chambers”, Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup>, 2001, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Office of the Governor, “Address by his Excellency, Chief James Onanefe Ibori, Governor of Delta State during a Courtesy Visit by the Subcommittee of the Presidential Special Security Committee at the Ex-Chambers”... 2001, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Director of Security, “The Imperative for Peace and State Security in Development Administration”, being a Paper Presented by the State Director of Security, Department of State Services, Delta State Command, at a Workshop for Community Development Committees, Songhai Delta Amukpe Centre Sapele, Delta State, 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2005.

<sup>19</sup> Director of Security, “The Imperative for Peace and State Security in Development Administration”... 2005, p. 5.

stock pile cache of arms during this period. A catalogue of illegal arms in circulation range from the following:

**Table 1: Illegal Arms in Circulation in the Course of Warri Crises**

S/N	Names of Weapons	Remarks
1.	Multi-Purpose Sub-Machine Guns (MPSMG)	Weapons used in the 1999 Warri Crisis
2.	AK-47	Leather weapon used in three of the conflicts
3.	AK-49	This type was utilised during the 1999 and 2003 crises
4.	FMG3 Rifles	These guns were seen in the course of the various crises
5.	Calibers of pistols	Popular among the warring parties
6.	Locally fabricated Dane Guns/Pistols	These guns are widespread in the area
7.	Dynamite	Explosive devices were deployed in the course of the 1999 and 2003 crises to burn down buildings

**Source: Compiled by the Author**

The table above shows the cache of arms used in the course of the Warri crises, and this further explains the development of youth restiveness and other criminal activities in Delta State part of the Niger Delta now termed Niger Delta militant. Stock piling of these weapons came with the erroneous believe that ethnic nationalities and communities reserved the right to acquire these weapons in defence of their ethnic/communities against external aggression. This explains the spread of firearms in the Delta area, in which larger number of arms were displayed at the presidential amnesty programme.

### **Destruction of Lives and Properties**

The inability of government to respond spontaneously in the course of the Warri crises no doubt was responsible for most of the lives and properties lost. For instance, Omadino, Ugborodo and Obodo Itsekiri communities were claimed to have being burn down on several occasions purportedly by the Ijaw ethnic groups. Although, there was no evidence of Ijaw communities been destroyed, thus, making it the only ethnic group to suffer less casualties<sup>20</sup>. This was due to the fact that the Ijaw communities are within

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<sup>20</sup>Chief Monday Turuoseyi, 42, President General Gbaramatu Kingdom, Warri Southwest, Okerenkoko, 22/02/2020.

the surrounding riverine areas, and this makes it difficult for other groups to attack their villages. As their terrain serves as a protective or fortress to the Ijaw group, but houses belonging to the Ijaw in the Warri metropolis were targeted. For example, the Itsekiri and Urhobo burned houses of the Ijaw, particularly areas around NPA, Bendel Estate, Iyara, and among others during the conflicts between the Ijaw/Itsekiri and Ijaw/Urhobo crises<sup>21</sup>.

On the part of the Urhobo, the Urhobo Progressive Union (UPU) in a letter submitted to the TY Danjuma's Commission of Inquiry on the Warri Crisis claimed that most of the arsons and looting in the course of the Warri crises were carried out by men of the Nigerian Armed Forces under the command of Lt. Col. Gar Dogo, Major Erhabor and other officers under their command<sup>22</sup>. Although there was no evidence to substantiate these claims, the UPU recommended the immediate withdrawal and prosecution of the officers and men under their command. Specifically, the UPU listed the properties destroyed in the course of the crisis, as it is stated in the table below:

**Table 2: Properties Destroyed in 2003 Warri Crisis**

S/N	Properties Destroyed	Address	Names of Victims
1.	Idama Hotel Complex	Okumagba Avenue, Warri	Chief Benjamin O. Okumagba
2.	Forty-Three Bungalows	Okere-Urhobo, Warri	The Families of Olodi, Oki and Ighogbadu
3.	Houses	Okere-Urhobo	Late Justice A.S.O Ejoh
4.	Elibel Clinic	Okere-Urhobo, Warri	Elibel
5.	Two-Storey Buildings	Okere-Urhobo	Chief Johnson Onokurhefe
6.	Bungalow	Okere-Urhobo	Chief Imih
7.	Bungalow	Sido Street, Opp. Cemetery Road, Warri	Chief Edward Sido
8.	Bungalow	Esiri Street, Opp. Cemetery Road Warri	Chief Dr. F.O Esiri
9.	Bungalow	Cemetery Road, Warri.	Chief Peter Edah Okoh
10.	Total Petrol Filling Station	Cemetery Road, Warri	Chief D.F Eruotor

**Source: Compiled by the Author**

<sup>21</sup>Chief Torulolo Love, 62, Contractor and Community Leader, Ekeremor, Burutu L.G.A, 05/03/2020.

<sup>22</sup>Urhobo Progressive Union, "The Responsible Minimum Demands by the Urhobos Based on Facts and Sound Reasoning for the Peaceful Resolution of the Warri Crisis for a Lasting Peace in the Warri Area", *A Memo Submitted to the Chairman, Warri Ethnic Crisis Resolution Committee*, Abuja: Ministry of Defence, 27 May, 2003.



The table above gives a description of the losses recorded on the side of the Urhobo ethnic nationality in the course of the 2003 Warri crisis. Although this list is not accurate, particularly on properties lost on the side of the Urhobo ethnic group, it however shows a clear indication of the destructive nature of the 2003 Warri crisis. Some other buildings that were owned by less influential people or Urhobo indigenous people in Warri, which were burnt by the opposing ethnic groups were not recorded.

In the course of field survey, Itsekiri communities visited claimed that Ijaw militia code named, “Federal Niger Delta Ijaw Community (FNDIC)” attacked Omadino, Madangho, Koko, Aruton and other Itsekiri communities near Escravos in 2003, killing dozens of people. They claimed that the villages attacked were taken by surprise and left them without much preparation to defend its people and property. The killings of a defenceless people left them with many casualties such that people were killed and in most cases an entire village was burnt down. Chief Jemide and Chief Ekpoko claimed that the ravaging Ijaw militia burned down Omadino and Koko communities. This attack and the inability of the Nigerian Armed Forces to repel the attack led to claims by members of Koko community that the military personnel stationed in Koko were bribed. They argued that the attack did not come unannounced, rumour of it had surfaced days before the onslaught but the military could not offer protection but ran away from the militia firepower and left its armoury on site of the Ijaw militia.

### **Cutting Down National Oil Production**

The crises in Warri, particularly the 1999 and 2003 uproars had severe impact on oil production in Delta State, such that several flow stations were reportedly attacked and other pipelines targeted by alleged Ijaw militia. These actions made Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), shut down over 10 flow stations in Delta State and evacuated employees and losing production of over 126,000 barrel per day in March 19, 2003<sup>23</sup>. The SPDC further closed down four more stations few days later, which then made its production output, fall to about 320,000 bpd<sup>24</sup>. Chevron Nigerian Limited (CNL), also affected by the crisis, suspended its onshore operations, and its main export terminal located in Escravos, causing an oil production output shortfall of 440,000 bpd<sup>25</sup>. Thus, this situation contributed to the declaration by both Chevron and SPDC

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<sup>23</sup> Human Right Watch, “The Warri Crisis: Fueling Violence”, *Human Right Watch Vol. 15 (18)*; November 2003, p. 8.

<sup>24</sup> Human Right Watch, “The Warri Crisis: Fueling Violence”... 2003, p. 8.

<sup>25</sup> Human Right Watch, “SPDC Letter to Human Right Watch”, *Human Right Watch*; November 4, 2003.

*force majeure* on the month of March, an inability for them to meet their obligations due to events beyond the companies' control, especially on their Nigerian exports<sup>26</sup>.

In a letter to Human Right Watch, written by the SPDC, the company detailed information about these unfortunate incidents that were targeted on its facilities, even though the facilities were shut down youth were reported to had destroyed several of those flow stations, including the ones owned by CNL particularly at Olero Creek and Dibi flow stations located in Itsekiri communities around the Escravos area; while the SPDC suffered casualties at the abandon Otumara and Saghara flow stations, and its logistic base at Escravos<sup>27</sup>. The activities of the warring groups were also directed to other multinational oil companies in the area, for instance, Total closed down its operation in Delta State because of pockets of vandalism of its facilities. However, by 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2003, the total loss of oil production in Delta State was more than 800,000 bpd, around 40% of Nigeria's usual oil output<sup>28</sup>.

#### **Youth Restiveness and Effect on Nigeria/Delta State's Economy**

The violent activities of militant groups, particularly in the oil producing and contiguous communities, constitute another dangerous dimension to peace and State Security. It can be stated at this moment that youth restiveness is accentuated by human needs to wit; agitation for unfulfilled needs of the people such as justice, protest against marginalization, despoliation of the environment and underdevelopment of the area amongst other grievances, an implication too grave to be ignored. Youth restiveness is a veritable threat to the implementation of National, State and Local Government Areas budgets and policies in the nation. The continuous activities of restive youths or militancy in the Delta area, particularly in Delta State factored as a major impediments to progressive development during this time. The tide of uncertainty generated imponderable apprehension in the minds of local and foreign potential investors to embark on investment drive in Delta State, given the plethora of recorded incidents such as:

- a. Kidnap, abduction and hostage taking of Nigerian and expatriate staffers of oil companies from drilling/production platforms, households, vehicles, industrial and residential compounds, waterways and boats to demand payment of ransom;

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<sup>26</sup> D. Balint-Kurti, "Shell Says Nigerian Unrest Shuts in 126,000", *Reuters*; March 19, 2003; N. Scott, "Chevron Texaco declares Force Majeure in Western Niger Delta", *WMRC Daily Analysis*, London; March 21, 2003.

<sup>27</sup> Human Right Watch, "SPDC Letter to Human Right Watch" ... 2003.

<sup>28</sup> D. Balint-Kurti, "Nigerian Militants Threaten to Blow Up Oil Facilities", *Reuters*; March 23, 2003.

- b. Forceful shut down and seizure of oil flow stations and production facilities;
- c. Illegal collection of levies from vehicles and river crafts plying roads and waterways;
- d. Extortion of money as pre-condition for execution of projects and development of lands;
- e. Vandalisation of oil pipelines, flow stations and production platforms;
- f. Frequent disruption of operation of oil companies/servicing companies and construction companies to demand job slots, development levies and financial gratification;
- g. Formation of militia groups and mercenaries to prosecute ethnic and communal wars, political thuggery and assassins<sup>29</sup>.

**Table 3: Oil Production Lost to the Warri Crisis**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activities of Militia</b>	<b>Volumes of Barrel Per Day Lost</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
March 19, 2003	10 flow stations of SPDC were attacked by Ijaw Militia	126,000	The SPDC evacuated staff and facilities from onshore location following intensity of the crisis.
March 23, 2003	Attacked of four flow stations belonging to the SPDC led to their shutting down	320,000	These flow stations had been shut down before they were attacked.
March 2003	CNL closed down its flow stations and main export terminal.	440,000	Chevron has most of its facilities in offshore location, around Itsekiri communities.
March 2003	CNL flow stations at Olero Creek and Dibi flow station were attacked even though they were shut down	440,000	These flow stations were CNL major production wells remained targets of conflict militias suspected to be of the Ijaw ethnic group.
March 22, 2003	Vandalisation of facilities belonging to Texaco	N.A	Although attacks on its facilities were minimal, to prevent further damage, it closed its facilities and suspended operations

**Source: Compiled by the Author**

<sup>29</sup>Director of Security, "The Imperative for Peace and State Security in Development Administration"... 2005, 6-7.

These hostilities mounted on the Nigerian oil companies in the course of the course of the crisis were mainly on issues bordering on over-lordship of the Warri area, in that, royalties from the largesse of oil was paid to the Olu of Warri. This brings the question of the title of Warri, which could be likened to the fact that who bears the title has exclusive rights over the entire land of Warri. Thus, since the government owned the land by virtue of the Land Use Act and the Nigerian Constitution (the 1999 Constitution as Amended), however, the customary ownership of land rests on the traditional ruler through which the people entrust communal land. The host communities are entitled to compensation from the oil companies operating within its areas, and the Itsekiri been a homogeneous group and the Olu who bears the title “Olu of Warri” receives compensation from oil companies.

### **Threat to Operations of Oil Companies**

The unremitting threats of attack and invasion of oil companies, oil servicing and construction companies were a major security concern in host communities particularly in Warri South, South-West and North, Isoko North, Bomadi, and Burutu L.G.As. in which the threats usually manifests in the agitation for implementation of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), payment of royalties, provision of employment slots, execution of community development projects/programmes and sundry issues are often orchestrated to exact pecuniary benefits. Instances abound of actuated and subsisting threats to the operations of oil companies, oil servicing companies and construction companies in the State.

**Table 4: Actions Directed at Oil Companies in Delta State 2002-2005**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Activities of Youth</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>2002</b>	Threat to disrupt/attack CNL/Texaco and SPDC installations by militant youths, hence the continued armed military escort of CNL/Texaco and SPDC barges/vessels along the waterways.	This action was taken by the Ijaw youth over compensation for exploratory and exploitative activities.
<b>2.</b>	<b>2002</b>	Threats by the Omadino Marine Oil/Gas and Water Drilling Workers Federation (OMOGWDWF) to disrupt SPDC drilling project in Warri South-West L.G.A, over non-implementation of MOU.	This action was carried out by the Itsekiri youths in need of job opportunities and contract.
<b>3.</b>	<b>2001</b>	Invasion of CNL/Texaco Tank Farm by over 400 youths from Ugborodo youths in Warri South-West L.G.A, over non-implementation of MOU.	The Itsekiri youths demanded among other things in the MOU job for the indigenous people of the community.

4.	2003	Hijack of Bilfinger and Berger B+B houseboats by the Federated Kunukunuma Community youths in Warri South-West.	The demand of the Ijaw youth was not well known at this time
6.	2003	Threat of disruption of SPDC shoreline project by Ogulagha community in Burutu L.G.A.	This threat was fulfilled late 2003 and the project was disrupted.
7.	2004	Threat to SPDC Odidi – Forcados Gas Link Pipeline project by youths from Iduwini clan in Burutu L.G.A and Itsekiri youths in Warri North L.G.A, over SPDC’s alleged insecurity to the host communities.	This combined action by the two unseemingly allied ethnic groups was a clear indications of the impact of the project on the communities.
8.	2004	Threat to Nigerian WestMinster Dredging and Marine Company (NWMDC) at CNL/Texaco Makaraba Oil Field by Makaraba youths in Warri South-West L.G.A.	The demands were unknown but later protest showed their actual needs.
9.	2004	Threat of vandalisation of the Independent Power Plant (IPP) at Okpai in Ndokwa East L.G.A by the National Federated Union of Ndokwa Students (FUNS).	The protest was mainly on the oil company (AGIP) not delivering on its promise for scholarship of the people and electric power supply

**Source: Compiled by the Author**

The table above shows threats and attacks of most of the facilities of oil companies and oil servicing companies. These actions were mainly on demands that bordered on implementation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and memorandum of understanding (MOU), demands in which these groups prided the cause of their actions. In some cases, vessels and houseboats were hijacked by irate or restive youths in Delta State, and attacks were made on pipelines causing oil spillages, particularly affecting communities that are connected with pipelines. Some communities’ demands were for constant electricity power supply particularly from companies’ turbine and pipe borne water; in frustration threats were made to host companies to meet these demands. This actually gave the common discourse, especially by people from these communities that the oil companies only respond to the message of protest and violence. This adage remains the major political economic approach of communities toward companies within their area, and to these communities results were yielded in the course of this approach.

## Conclusion

The Warri crises, a conflict that have been in existence between the Urhobo and Itsekiri over the Lordship of Warri, i.e. claim of the title of Warri, since the colonial rule in Southern Nigeria but without physical confrontation. But with the latest criminality of pipeline vandalism and oil bunkering with little or no interference from the Nigerian Federal Military Government and the PPMC; proliferation of small arms and light weapons became stockpiled by these groups and the 1997 crisis was a dress rehearsal of arms acquired by these groups. These arms were further utilized (coupled with larger acquisition by the different ethnic groups; Urhobo, Istekiri and Ijaw) in the course of the 2001 and 2003 crises. After the crises, although the State and Federal Governments restored peace, the arms used were not retrieved as part of the peace process. Thus, these arms became the face of the Niger Delta militancy that rocked the country's oil industry affecting Nigeria's production of crude oil and the economy in general.

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