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Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

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Information on the security situation in Delta state including terrorist activity and peace agreements

In February 2010 a report by *IRIN News* states:

“Despite abundant oil wealth in the Niger Delta region in southeast Nigeria, residents lack basic services including electricity, piped water, health clinics and schools. The region has seen decades of unrest stemming mostly from local militants’ uprisings over what they call neglect of the moneymaking region” (IRIN News (4 February 2010) *Nigeria: Timeline of recent unrest in Niger Delta region*)

IRIN News in April 2010 notes:

“The government’s amnesty programme whereby militants in the Niger delta are to be disarmed and rehabilitated with a stipend, job training and a micro-credit loan, has been linked to reduced violence in the delta, but critics say it has made the same mistake as almost every other disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration (DDRR) campaign: too much “dd” and not enough “rr”. “The government has not been conscientious about implementing the rehabilitation and reintegration dimensions for the amnesty,” Nnamdi Obasi, senior analyst at the International Crisis Group (ICG), told IRIN. “Part of this has been blamed on delays relating to the president’s illness, but more fundamentally, it was not well-thought-out or planned.” “ (IRIN News (23 April 2010) *Analysis: Nigeria’s Delta amnesty at risk of unravelling*)

A report in May 2010 by *Agence France Presse* states:

“Militants in oil rich southern Nigeria who last year laid down arms under an amnesty deal on Wednesday pledged to back new leader Goodluck Jonathan to ensure peace holds in the Niger Delta. Some 20,000 former armed rebels who were fighting for a fairer share of oil revenues to go to local communities, took up the amnesty offer extended by late leader Umaru Yar’Adua last October” (Agence France Presse (19 May 2010) *Nigeria’s ex-militants make peace pledge for Niger Delta*)

In May 2010 a publication by *Reuters* states:

“Nigeria’s main militant group on Thursday dismissed government pledges to revive an post-amnesty programme in the Niger Delta, saying it failed to address their demands for greater control of the region’s oil resources. President Goodluck Jonathan’s administration is set to relaunch the stalled programme for thousands of former gunmen who surrendered their arms last year in return for the promise of stipends, education and job opportunities” (Reuters (20 May 2010) *Nigerian militants dismiss renewed peace drive*)

A paper published in June 2010 by the *Bonn International Centre for Conversion* states:

"Peace in the Niger Delta, following the implementation of the amnesty for militants in October 2009, is very fragile" (Bonn International Centre for Conversion (June 2010) *Revenue Transparency to Mitigate the Resource Curse in the Niger Delta?*, p.5)

A Congressional Research Service paper in June 2010 reports:

"Oil output has increased since the ceasefire was declared, but observers warn that unless the root causes of the conflict are addressed, further violence will follow" (Congressional Research Service (4 June 2010) *Nigeria*, p.23)

An article in June 2010 from *Voice of America* states:

"Nigeria's main militant group, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) has claimed responsibility for an attack at an oil facility in Niger state. Six soldiers were reportedly killed" (Voice of America (11 June 2010) *Nigeria's Main Militant Group, MEND, Claims Responsibility For Attack on Oil Facility*)

Voice of America in June 2010 states:

"Militants in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta say they may resume their fight against the federal government because of delays in delivering the benefits of last year's amnesty program. Thousands of delta gunmen turned in their weapons last year, returning some calm to the troubled region after years of fighting about what militants say is the federal government's neglect of people living in the area that generates the bulk of Nigeria's oil wealth" (Voice of America (14 June 2010) *Nigerian Militants Threaten More Violence over Amnesty Delays*)

In June 2010 *Reuters* notes:

"Nigeria is expected to begin rehabilitating hundreds of former militants in the Niger Delta this week, raising hopes for improved security in the oil-producing region, organisers said on Monday. President Goodluck Jonathan has made a priority of reviving a post-amnesty programme for thousands of former gunmen who surrendered their arms last year in return for the promise of stipends, education and job opportunities" (Reuters (28 June 2010) *Nigeria beginning rehab classes for ex-oil rebels*)

This article also states:

"Militant attacks, which were particularly intense in 2006, significantly disrupted Nigeria's oil industry, preventing it from pumping much more than two thirds of its 3 million barrel per day capacity. Output has never fully recovered. But since the amnesty was launched, the Niger Delta has been relatively peaceful with no major militant attack against the oil industry for nearly a year" (*ibid*)

Accord in July 2010 reports:

"There are several challenges to a post-amnesty Niger Delta. The first is the challenge of elite accumulation. The Niger Delta crisis has been good business to several elites, and its resolution will be bad business for them: the munitions that the militants use are imported by individuals or by a consortium; the illegally-obtained oil from bunkering is also marketed by someone; and there are also elites that gain

relevance by acting as go-betweens or “mediators”. The second challenge is that of sustainability. How the government is able to sustain the tempo of peace, especially by adhering to and discharging its own core tasks, will determine the course of the peace process in the Niger Delta. The third is the challenge of inclusiveness. As has already been noted, there are motley groups in the Niger Delta. All of them must be carried along for widespread and enduring peace. For instance, a group of 400 ex-militants recently protested in Benin over their exclusion from the amnesty programme. The fourth challenge is that of infrastructural development. While part of the underlying rationalisation of the upsurge in militancy is the neglect of the region in terms of provision of basic infrastructure, the government must fulfil its infrastructural obligation to consolidate peace in the post-amnesty Niger Delta” (Accord (July 2010) *Community Reintegration Models for Ex-militias: Lessons for the Niger Delta and other divided societies*, p.35)

A publication by *Agence France Presse* in July 2010 states:

“About 1,000 ex-militants who last year laid down their arms under a government amnesty on Wednesday protested against their exclusion from the on-going post-amnesty retraining programme” (Agence France Presse (7 July 2010) *Ex-Niger Delta militants protest in Nigeria*)

It is also noted in this article that:

“Former President Umaru Yar'Adua granted amnesty to militants who surrendered their arms between August and early October last year. More than 20,000 of them turned in their arms during the stipulated period. They began their retraining programme in batches at the end of last month in southeastern Cross River State” (*ibid*)

It is noted by *BBC News* in August 2010 that:

“Oil giant Royal Dutch Shell has said acts of sabotage are increasing in southern Nigeria. The Anglo-Dutch company said it had suffered at least three separate incidents of sabotage on its pipelines in the Niger Delta this month” (BBC News (15 August 2010) *Niger Delta oil pipeline sabotage 'increasing'*)

It is stated by *Reuters* in August 2010 that:

“The killing of a powerful former Nigerian gang leader in the restive Niger Delta has laid bare the fragility of an amnesty programme for ex-militant fighters in Africa's biggest oil and gas industry” (Reuters (30 August 2010) *Gang murder shows fragility of Nigerian oil amnesty*)

In September 2010 a report by *Reuters* states:

“Africa's biggest oil and gas industry, spread across the mangrove creeks of the Niger Delta, has gone more than a year without a significant militant attack, the result of last year's amnesty in which thousands of gunmen laid down arms. But some ex-militants are complaining the post-amnesty programme has stalled, with promises of stipends and retraining unfulfilled. Jonathan has made pledges but progress is slow. Industry sources say there has been a sharp rise in bunkering -- the theft of industrial quantities of crude oil -- and illegal refining, as militants who took part in the amnesty but have not been re-trained seek other sources of income” (Reuters (1 September 2010) *Factbox-Key political risks to watch in Nigeria =2*).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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