



MOVEMENT FOR THE SURVIVAL OF THE Ogoni PEOPLE (MOSOP)



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PRESS RELEASE

SHELL'S CLAIM IRRESPONSIBLE

The umbrella body of the Ogoni people, MOSOP, has been outraged at media reports credited to Shell, wherein its spokesperson, Precious Okolobo, accused local Ogoni communities of denying SPDC (Shell Petroleum Development Company Limited) access to the sections of the Trans Niger Pipeline that has been in flames over two weeks now.

It has become a tradition that whenever such incident occurs, Shell mischievously resorts to cheap blackmail to undermine the genuine position of the Ogoni people to sway sympathy from us, as well as weaken international pressure against her questionable corporate attitude.

We submit that there is no iota of truth in Shell's claims. Information available to MOSOP indicates that the affected communities particularly Kegbara Dere has had considerable number of meetings with Shell over the matter. We were further and impeccably told that instead of SPDC responding to the immediate need of putting out the fires; it regrettably demanded its being allowed entry into Ogoni to effect some operational activities including pigging, killing of oil wells and fencing of the manifold station in Kegbara Dere as precondition for extinguishing the fires. All other efforts by the communities particularly Kegbara Dere to make SPDC see reason has yielded no result to date.

The environmental and health implications of the fire incidents including destruction of crops and farmlands, contamination of sources of drinking water, increasing cases of dysentery and diarrhea, skin rashes and respiratory problems are such that affected communities cannot afford to resist genuine steps directed at resolving the problem. To strengthen the communities' commitment and to ensure no reoccurrence, five identified culprits have been arrested by the Kegbara Dere community and handed over to the police for prosecution. Unfortunately, Shell had shown no interest in the matter.

However, we are shocked to learn that the main reasons for SPDC's refusal to extinguish the fires at the vandalized sections of the Trans Niger Pipeline, according to Precious Okolobo, are that the fires have in no way affected its production whilst the consequences of the present development are suffered by the communities only. This uncaring attitude of Shell to the plight of our people, which has remained unaddressed over the years and which the people have been protesting against, is incapable of supporting improvement in Shell-Ogoni relationship.

We are therefore reaffirming our earlier stance on the closure of the Trans Niger Pipeline operated by SPDC on safety grounds and since Shell has shown gross incapacity to operate the trunk line. Similarly, we wish to reiterate the Ogoni position that the Federal Government should as a matter of urgency consider allocating the Ogoni concession to another operator who would respect our concerns and respond adequately to our needs.

These steps, in our view, would significantly assist in addressing the Ogoni question.

For further information/clarification, please contact Bari-ara Kpalap on **08068228065**.

Signed:

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Information Officer

