



MOVEMENT FOR THE SURVIVAL OF THE OGONI PEOPLE (MOSOP)



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Press Release

MOSOP DECRIES OBASANJO'S COMMENTS

The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, MOSOP, has described as unfortunate the recent vituperations against the organization by President Obasanjo during the thanksgiving service at Bori on the 14th of May 2007. MOSOP vehemently denies and indeed protest the unfounded allegation that the organization or its leadership has been a cog in the wheel of peace and progress in Ogoni. On the contrary, MOSOP have been the engine driving peace in Ogoni and other parts of the Niger Delta. Not only has the organization continued to conduct its campaigns non-violently but continued to be the leading light in pointing to peaceful advocacy for the rights of peoples of the Niger Delta. Thanks to MOSOP and its leadership today Ogoni remains the oasis of peace in a region that has been afflicted with violent conflicts. Contrarily, it is MOSOP, AND NOT FATHER KUKAH, that have championed the resolution of communal and other crisis in Ogoni whenever they reared their heads, and the Rivers State Government have publicly commended MOSOP's role in the respect.

It is common knowledge that MOSOP brought Ogoni and the plight of the Niger Delta peoples to limelight through peaceful advocacy. We therefore find it difficult to comprehend how the same vehicle of change, would turn round to be a cog in the wheel of peace and progress in the area. We thus ponder to ask: Is MOSOP responsible for the lack of social amenities including electricity, pipe borne water, good roads, functional schools and hospitals in Ogoni? Is MOSOP and its leadership also responsible for the now impassable federal road through Ogoni to Akwa Ibom and beyond? Is MOSOP as well responsible for the thwarting of the people's will through the sham called election in Ogoni? Certainly MOSOP must not have been the cog that made it impossible for the President to commission any project during any of his three visits to Ogoni during the life of this administration.

If the truth be told, the fact that MOSOP resisted the attempt to foist upon the Ogoni people a controversial Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Federal Government, the Rivers State Government, UNEP, Shell and the Ogoni people that has not been discussed and agreed with the people should not translate to MOSOP and its leadership becoming a cog in the wheel of peace and development of Ogoni. Although MOSOP does understand the desperation by those whose plan to force the MoU on the Ogoni people failed, it does not think it could degenerate to briefing the President to making the unfortunate comments capable of inciting the people against MOSOP by leveling baseless allegations against the Movement and her leadership.

As for the relevance of MOSOP to the Ogoni cause and that of the Niger Delta, we would insist that it is for the Ogoni people and the peoples of the Niger Delta to say, not Shell and those responsible for the neglect of the area. It is shame that the oppressors appear uninformed of the significance of civil society groups to democratic sustenance and community development hence the inept views expressed. Evidences abound that organizations such as MOSOP exist in other parts of the country including Yorubaland and within Nigeria's democracy without Obasanjo and his group seeing anything wrong with them.

The truth remains that even if MOSOP and its leadership are removed, the Ogoni problem will still confront the Nigerian State until sincerely addressed. MOSOP thus do not see how blackmail or incitement can become solution to the Ogoni question. We want to make it clear that MOSOP has the duty of protecting and defending the rights of our people based on the mandate given to it by the Ogoni people, which have not been withdrawn. The stance of MOSOP is based on adequate understanding of the issues and transparency, which has endeared it to the people. MOSOP will therefore not succumb to mischievous tendencies including blackmail, intimidation and incitement. It is our position that the present approach relating to the controversial environmental clean up of Ogoni is faulty and would not provide the necessary solution to our environmental problems. It will thus amount to disservice to our people if MOSOP fails to resist such devious manipulation of the oppressor knowing its implications to the interest of Ogoni.

Whilst assuring the Ogoni people that we will never betray the cause for which they have made huge sacrifices, MOSOP calls on all Ogonis to remain peaceful and united and never to allow agents of destabilization to divide us. We also call on all lovers of peace and justice around the world to hold Obasanjo and his group responsible for any crises that occurs in Ogoni.

Signed:

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Information Officer

