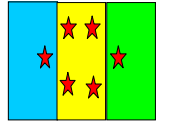


MOVEMENT FOR THE SURVIVAL OF THE Ogoni PEOPLE (MOSOP)



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Press Release

UNEP CREDIBILITY COLLAPSING

The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) is outraged at press reports confirming the arrival of a team of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) experts in Nigeria to commence clean-up activities in Ogoni communities, sequel to a so-call agreement between Nigeria's Central Government, Shell, Reverend Father Matthew Hassan Kukah and UNEP. MOSOP is deeply concerned that decision relating to such a sensitive matter as the Ogoni question of which clean-up is a major issue was taken without even the courtesy of informing our people or involved them. Since this action, in our view, lacks transparency and credibility and betrays a secret plot camouflaged under this dubious clean-up project, we cannot be in a position to guarantee the co-operation of our people.

We note with dismay that it does appear that the Federal Government, UNEP and their collaborators have learnt no lesson as it was similar questionable approach that was responsible for the failure of the last attempt by UNEP and government to resolve the problem. The organization had thus thought that the duo and their friends would evolve a standard and participatory approach in attending to the problem rather than toying with our survival.

We re-call that the last effort was undermined and consequently failed because of pronounced and intolerable, underhand tactics of Shell and the deliberate non-transparent and unaccountable management of the process by Reverend Father Matthew Hassan Kukah who unpretentiously worked to achieve the pre-determined outcome of returning Shell to Ogoni to commence oil production hence MOSOP backed out and the process collapsed. MOSOP had thus vowed never to be part of any process that involves Father Kukah as he has sadly showed his hatred for the Ogoni. We therefore find it difficult to rationalize why government had stuck to Shell and Rev. Fr. Kukah to decide the fate of the Ogoni in the face of genuine protests against their poor conduct.

The present attempt, coming at a time when the Federal Government has shown double standard relating to its replacement of Shell in Ogoni and her questionable accord with the oil mogul, pairing it as a silent partner of the NNPC in Ogoni; and the believed sponsorship of present communal violence in Ogoni, which have inflicted considerable loss of human life and property on the people as well as disrupted social, economic and agricultural activities, the timing of the project is suspect. It is thus a shame that the federal government seem to be more interested in the oil major as against the protection of the rights of our people. We would like to warn that the federal government is on test as only recently it was lambasted by the UN Human Rights Council during the Universal Peer Review (UPR) for its poor record of human rights reflected in her callous relationship with the people.

We would thus advice UNEP to refrain from allowing itself to be used by Shell, some selfish state officials and their collaborators as not to pitch itself against the Ogoni. We insist that the issues that the Ogoni people had raised earlier have not been addressed and we would not be able to participate in any process when those grievances remain unattended to. Since we hold no confidence in the current process especially when it has been clothed in demonstrable and detrimental secrecy, we would have no alternative than to mobilize our people against any intrusion into our land.

Signed:

Bari-ara Kpalap

Information Officer

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