

**Refugee Review Tribunal  
AUSTRALIA**

**RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE**

**Research Response Number:** NGA34744  
**Country:** Nigeria  
**Date:** 30 April 2009

**Keywords:** Nigeria – NGA34744 – Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force – NDPVF – Niger Delta Non Violent Movement – Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta – MEND – September 2005 hostage drama – Treatment of journalists – press freedom

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**Questions**

1. Deleted.
2. What is the Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force’s (NDPVF) purpose? Does it still operate? Are members targeted by the government or any other actor?
3. What is the Niger Delta Non-Violent Movement? Is it still active? Are members targeted by the government or any other actor?
4. What is MEND’s purpose? Is it a militant group?
5. Is there any information about tension and/or disputes between MEND and NDPVF members? If so, is this still the case?
6. Please provide information about a hostage crisis in 21 September 2005 by members of the NDPVF protesting that their leader (Mr Asari) had been arrested for treason the day before.
7. What is the situation in Nigeria like for independent journalists in terms of press freedom and state protection?

**RESPONSE**

1. Deleted.

2. What is the Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force’s (NDPVF) purpose? Does it still operate? Are members targeted by the government or any other actor?

The Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force was formed in 2003 from the Ijaw Youth Council, effectively as a ‘militant wing’ of that organisation. Mujahid Dokubo Asari has been its leader since that time. One interpretation describes its demands as

generally built around the question of the underdevelopment of the Niger Delta, lack of benefits from oil exploitation, political and economic marginalization, and environmental insecurity. The NDPVF has as its primary objectives the mobilization and organization of the

youth against the state and oil companies in a violent manner. Pursuant to this, the NDPVF has, over the years, engaged at various times in armed confrontations with the state—the military and police—and oil companies. Specifically, the NDPVF had on many occasions organized the youths for seizure of oil facilities, kidnapping of oil workers, and direct exchange of gun-battle with security operatives. This was made possible with the number of armed men in its fold and the amount of deadly small arms available to them. Recently, in September 2004, Asari Dokubo, the leader of the NDPVF, publicly claimed that the NDPVF already had 10,000 men “ready to reclaim the resources of the Niger Delta.”<sup>32</sup> The eventual arrest and protracted detention of Asari Dokubo, in defiance to the persistent call for his release not only by his NDPVF, but also by civil groups in the Niger Delta, may have contributed to the increasing violent assault on the oil companies, workers, and security personnel in the region. His eventual release by the new Yar’Adua government in June 2007 has, disappointingly, not been able to stem the tide of violence in the region (Omotola, J. Shola 2009, ‘Dissent and state excesses in the Niger Delta, Nigeria’, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 32, No. 2, p. 137, <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713742821~db=all> –Attachment 2).

An earlier summary is also relevant;

The conflict between the Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force (NDPVF), led by Mujahid Dokubo-Asari, and the Nigerian government is linked to broader political rivalries in the state. In the aftermath of state and federal elections in April-May 2003, a turf war between Asari Dokubo’s NDPVF and Ateke Tom’s Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV) escalated due to perceived support for Ateke by local politicians, and after Asari decided to serve notice to oil multinationals to quit the Niger Delta to allow for the Ijaw to control “their” oil for their own development. Asari built up NDPVF during 2003/ 2004. Already in 2001 when he became president of Ijaw Youths Council (IYC) he demanded “Resource Control and Self Determination “By Every Means Necessary”, signalling his readiness to do battle with the Nigerian State. NDPVF claims to fight for the interest of the ethnic Ijaw People of the delta region, which it says have suffered neglect and deprivation despite being the source of Nigeria’s oil wealth. The multi-million dollar trade has done little to benefit the delta’s impoverished people. NDPVF leader, Asari has also said he is fighting for self-determination for the Niger-Delta. According to the government, however, Asari, and his organisation, is nothing more than a criminal gang which finances itself by stealing oil from pipelines and selling it clandestinely to tankers offshore (Department of Peace and Conflict Research University of Uppsala Conflict Database undated, ‘Nigeria – General Information’ <http://www.pcr.uu.se/database/conflictSummary.php?bcID=246> – Accessed 22 April 2009 – Attachment 3).

A Research Response from February 2008 provides detailed information on the structure, origins, aims and leadership of the Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force (RRT Research & Information 2008, *RRT Research Response NGA32922*, 4 February – Attachment 4).

The organisation also has a political arm in the form of the Niger Delta People’s Salvation Front, according to a recent report a group with 5,000 members across three states. It is suggested that this ‘has not yet proven to be a recognizable voice of the NDPVF’ (Davis, Stephen 2009, *The Potential for Peace and Reconciliation in the Niger Delta*, February, p. 124, published by Coventry Cathedral, <http://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/about-us/our-reconciliation-ministry.php> – Accessed 28 April 2009 – Attachment 5).

The organisation’s leader Asari Dokubo rejected claims in May last year that the NDPVF had ceased to play any active role in the Delta’s events (‘Nigeria: No going back on Niger Delta

struggle' 2008, *All Africa* [source: Leadership], 19 May, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805191122.html> – Accessed 23 April 2009 – Attachment 6).

In a fundamental sense to speak of the organisation being targetted by state authorities assumes some division between holding government office and support for a non-government body. In Nigeria this should not be assumed, as a recent analysis makes clear:

The so-called ethnic militias (the NDV and the NDPDF), for example, got their start by being supported (financially and with arms) by politicians in the oil-producing states; the decentralization of corruption, the rise of powerful gubernatorial machine politicians, and the 'democratization of violence' that mark post-1999 Nigeria all signal how porous is the state/rebel divide. The NDV and the NDPDF were deployed as political thugs to deliver votes and intimidate voters in the notoriously corrupt and violent 2003 elections (although they were also operative in 1999). Furthermore, a number of the arms used by the militias have been acquired from the Nigerian military (directly in relationship to electoral political thuggery and indirectly from a notorious and corrupt and undisciplined army). And last but not least, the low level oil theft ('bunkering') that is controlled by the rebels as one way of financing their struggle, is organized through a vast state-centred syndicate linking high ranking military, politicians, the security apparatuses, and the Niger Delta special military task forces, and the navy coast guard. The Nigerian state in its various expressions and the rebels are both oppositional and organically self-sustaining. The head of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission [EFCC] Nuhu Ribadu put the issue with great precision: the true state of affair is 'not even corruption. It is organized crime' (*The Economist*, 28 April 2007, p. 56) (Watts, Michael 2008, 'Anatomy of an Oil Insurgency: Violence and Militants in the Niger Delta, Nigeria' in Omeje, Kenneth (ed), *Extractive Economics and Conflicts in the Global South* (Ashgate Publishing, London), p. 59 – Attachment 7).

Other background information is also provided in the following analyses:

Legal Oil Com Information Paper of January 2007 ('Shifting trends in oil theft in the Niger Delta' 2007, LegalOil.Com website <http://www.legaloil.com/Library.asp> – Accessed 23 April 2009 – Attachment 8).

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2008, *NGA102884.E – Nigeria: Leadership structure of the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF); whether a certain individual is a leader of the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF); his alleged arrest in 2006 and his current whereabouts*, 24 June – Attachment 9).

### **3.What is the Niger Delta Non-Violent Movement? Is it still active? Are members targeted by the government or any other actor?**

The Niger Delta Non-Violent Movement is a non-government organisation that appears to have been formed in response to the level of violence in the Niger Delta early in 2008 following a meeting of youth representatives held in Port Harcourt at the end of January;

A major step aimed at reconciling militant groups in the Niger Delta region with government to ensure permanent peace for the larger society was taken in Port Harcourt last week. This followed the inauguration of a group known as Niger Delta Non-Violent Movement, NDNVM. More than one thousand youth representatives drawn from across the region attended the programme, which took place at the Isaac Boro Park in the Rivers State capital January 26.

Onengiye Erekosima, president of the movement, said the organisation was aimed at creating a platform for making the various militant groups in the region to permanently lay down their weapons and embrace genuine reconciliation with the society. He said the organisation would organise rehabilitation programmes for militant youths in the region, mediate between them and the government as well as wage sustained campaign against proliferation of arms in the Niger Delta.

Erekosima regretted that oil in the Niger Delta was rather turning out a curse for the people. He blamed government and oil companies for exploiting the people in the course of oil exploration ('Rivers: Group against violence launched' 2008, *NewsWatch*, 3 February, <http://www.newswatchngr.com/editorial/allaccess/nigeria/10203211304.htm> – Accessed 23 April 2009 – Attachment 10).

The organisation has an official website which lists a number of office bearers including a President, Erekosima Onengiye, Vice-President Joe Fyeface, Secretary-General Obiene Pat, Assistant Secretary Fuayefika Appolos, Clara Braah, Women's Leader and others. Its philosophy embraces non violent 'resistance to all forms of oppression and injustice in the Niger Delta'. Its stated aims as published on its website are

- To organize rehabilitation programmes for militant youths in the niger delta
- To mediate between the armed agitating youths and the government.
- To wage a sustained campaign against the proliferation of arms in the Niger Delta.
- To negotiate with the restive youths of Niger Delta on the need to lay down their arms.
- To negotiate and search for jobs for the restive youths of our region.
- To organize mass education programs for the purpose of re- orientating our militants' youths.
- To organize a systematic process of re-integration of former militants into the society.
- To organize monthly interactive session between the various governments, NDDC and the Niger Delta peoples and activist.
- To encourage government to give peaceful change a chance.
- To pursue the vision of the organization of the demands of the Niger Delta people through non-violent means (Welcome page 2009, Niger Delta Non Violent Movement website, <http://www.nigerdeltanonviolentmovement.org/> – Accessed 23 April 2009 – Attachment 11).

During 2008, the organisation made various public statements and made representation to state authorities on a number of occasions. On 11<sup>th</sup> April 2008, for example, it issued a 'world press briefing' in the form of an open letter to President Yar'adua pleading the case of Henry Okah, a MEND leader who was extradited from Angola on treason and gun-running charges earlier that year. The President of the organisation over whose name the statement was made claimed it was essential that Okah was given a 'fair hearing'. It was necessary that forgiveness and amnesty be given to Okah and others from the Delta, in order that militancy would end:

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo failed when he believed that the crisis they engineered in the Niger Delta must not be resolved peacefully and through dialogue. But rather believes that the Federal Government must use its might to settle once and for, all the problem of the region, to him, the youths in the Niger Delta are criminals and insurgents who must be dealt with without recourse to due process.

In his assumption, they are bunch of illiterates, dropouts, Pipeline Vandals Hostage takers, Kidnappers who ask for ransom, sea pirates, Gun runners and therefore must be criminalized indiscriminately and treated as second-class citizens by bending the law a little bit. I pray that you do not follow his path but employ the same sense of administrative sagacity you exhibited in the case of Alhaji Dokubo-Asari, in Henry Okah's case too.

The resolution of the Niger Delta imbroglio does not lie in the criminalization, arrest, detention, trial conviction and extermination of our people but in addressing our people and this bothers on the criminal and gross violation of the right of our peoples to self-determination as provided for by the United Nations Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples (September 2007). This is an open endorsement of the Kiyama Declaration, Oron Bill of Right, Ogoni Bill of Rights, and PRONACO DRAFT CONSTITUTION AS PROPOSED BY THE PEOPLES National conference of which I represent my people (Niger Delta Non Violent Movement 2008, 'World Press Briefing on the State of Nigeria and the Niger Delta. An Open Letter to President Yar'Adua, issued by Onengiye Erekosima, President, 11 April, [http://www.nigerdeltanonviolentmovement.org/press\\_releases.html](http://www.nigerdeltanonviolentmovement.org/press_releases.html) – Accessed 27 April 2009 – Attachment 12).

In a press conference held in Abuja in August, the Niger Delta Non-Violent Movement organisation's president was quoted as saying that efforts had been made 'to reconcile all the militant groups in Rivers state with a view to bringing lasting peace to the state.' He also called on Governor Amaechi to be more conciliatory towards those who 'had offended him in the past'. Opposition including that by 'Ateke Tom, Soboma George and others already labelled militants' could be reconciled ('Nigeria: Group moves to reconcile militant groups' 2008, *All Africa* [source: This Day], 25 August, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200808251022.html> – Accessed 23 April 2009 – Attachment 13).

In November 2008, the Movement endorsed the appointment of Kingsley Kuku as junior minister to the Niger Delta Ministry ('Nigeria: Don't politicise ministerial appointment' 2008, *All Africa* [source: Leadership], 19 November, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200811190803.html> – Accessed 23 April 2009 – Attachment 14).

#### **4. What is MEND's purpose? Is it a militant group?**

Most commentators regard the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) not as a single-purpose organisation but, rather, a loose coalition of groups of Ijaw ethnicity. It emerged in late 2005 to early January 2006. Some analysts interpret its origins in terms of the vacuum created by the imprisonment of NDPVF leader Asari;

It was during Asari's absence and a split in the FNDIC that MEND first burst forth on the public consciousness in Nigeria in February 2006, with far-reaching global ramifications. MEND took the conflict in the Niger Delta to the level of an insurgency. The group has effectively been able to attract international attention to the plight of the Ijaw and its resistance campaign through the taking hostage of foreign oil workers, demonstrating the inability of Nigerian security forces to stop its attacks and sabotage of oil installations, and the effective use of the global news media. Using the internet to send emails and images to the world's leading news agencies and local newspapers, taking journalists to its camps in the swamps of the Niger Delta (Junger 2007), MEND has tried to distance itself from the local political class and the ransoming of foreign hostages, and tapping into local idioms, symbols and grievances to embed itself in the people's consciousness. It has several times unilaterally declared ceasefires to possibly create space for a negotiation of its demands or as part of its tactical moves. It has however gained most attention internationally by its threats to "cripple Nigerian oil exports" (Obi, Cyril I. 2008, 'Eye of the storm: Ethnic identities and 'contested

sovereignties' in the Niger Delta', p. 19, Paper presented at 49<sup>th</sup> ISA Annual Convention, San Francisco, March 26-29, Global Policy Forum website, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/nations/future/index.htm> – Accessed 20 April 2009 – Attachment 35).

One academic writer who interviewed members of the militia in an attempt to meet directly with MEND leaders in 2007 has written that

MEND is not an “organisation” in the formal sense of the word. It is an idea, a general principle underlying the slew of communal, civic and youth movements that began to proliferate in the Niger Delta, and particularly in the Ijaw-speaking areas, in the wake of General Babangida's failed adjustment policies in the late 1980s. The Ken Saro-Wiwa inspired Movement of the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), which emerged in 1990, and the Ijaw National Congress, birthed in Port Harcourt a year later, have their genesis in this turbulent economic and political milieu.

These organisations pursued such civic goals as the end to military rule and the return of democratic civilian government, creation of new states in ethnic minority areas, and increase in their share of oil receipts. They utilised non-violent protest marches, advocacy in the mass media, petitions addressed to the government, and awareness-building seminars to press their case. However, as economic conditions worsened country-wide and election results were annulled by Babangida in 1993, a wave of anger and desperation began to spread.

Its profile has been developed and its strength can be attributed to four main reasons;

It has successfully tapped into the fifty-year Ijaw quest for social and environmental justice in the Niger Delta. There is no village in the Niger Delta where MEND sympathisers do not exist. Consequently, the movement is able to mount lightening attacks and melt into the hamlets undetected.

Second, MEND is a loose coalition of armed militants, guided by a collegiate leadership, but which does not in any way constrain the ability of the various units to take their own decisions and mount military attacks independent of the others. The units plan their attacks separately, but are able to coordinate with other units in joint expeditions when necessary. Consequently they are active in all parts of the delta, adopting hit-and-run tactics and making it difficult for federal troops to box them into a particular area and launch a massive attack.

Third, MEND militants fight in familiar territory, having fished and farmed in the maze of creeks, marshes, and mangrove swamps that constitute the Niger Delta since childhood. The Nigerian army and navy have superior hardware, but they often lose their way in the creeks when they mount attacks or give chase to the militants, rendering them impotent or—worse—vulnerable to counter-attack. Several soldiers and naval ratings have lost their lives in this manner.

Fourth, MEND is an astute manipulator of the mass media, and has ensured that its case against the government and the oil companies has been clearly and eloquently made in newspapers and television networks in Nigeria and world-wide. Its case has been helped by the tragic events of 1990-1995 in the Ogoni area, when Shell officials worked actively with the Abacha junta to unleash harsh repression, culminating in the hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa and the “Ogoni Eight”—peaceful activists framed on murder charges—on Nov. 10 1995. Journalists and activists in Nigeria, Europe and America who followed in the Ogoni struggle have enthusiastically taken up MEND's case (Okonta, Ike 2007, 'Niger Delta: Behind the mask', January, World War 4 Report website, <http://ww4report.com/node/2974> – Accessed 30 April 2009. (Attachment 39).

A Research Response from February 2008 provides detailed information on the structure, origins, aims and leadership of the MEND (RRT Research & Information 2008, *RRT Research Response NGA32922*, 4 February – Attachment 4).

An earlier Research Response also provides information concerning MEND (RRT Country Research 2006, *RRT Research Response NGA30811*, 2 November – Attachment 15).

Its leadership structure has never been clear and its principal spokesman has been Jomo Gbomo, whose identity may in fact be no more than a pseudonym for an e-mail account to which various leaders have access ('Wasteful wars, foreign friends' 2008, *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 49. No. 17, 22 August – Attachment 16).

A recent 3-part Stratfor analysis provides additional information concerning the formation and operation of MEND, and a number of disparate groups are identified in its genesis:

At the time, the leaders of known MEND factions included Farah Dagogo, whose gang in the Tombia axis of Rivers state became known as the Niger Delta Strike Force (NDSF); Ebikabowei Victor (aka Victor Ben and Gen. Boyloaf), who commanded the faction Bayelsa state axis; Government Ekpemupolo (aka Gen. Tammo and Government Tompolo), whose faction, headquartered near the town of Warri in Delta state, was called the Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities; and Soboma George, whose gang, since breaking from Ateke Tom and his Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV), became known as the Outlaws and served as another MEND faction in Rivers state.

MEND also included an arms dealer named Henry Okah, who was based in South Africa until his arrest in Luanda, Angola, in September 2007 on arms smuggling charges. Okah was later extradited to Nigeria, where he is being held on charges of treason (Stratfor 2009, 'Nigeria's MEND: A different militant movement', 19 March, [http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/20090316\\_nigerias\\_mend\\_different\\_militant\\_movement](http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/20090316_nigerias_mend_different_militant_movement) – Accessed 23 April 2009 – Attachment 17).

An enlarged version of the Stratfor diagram outlining the relationships between some of the militant Niger Delta groups is included for information (Attachment 37).

Factionalism within MEND has been observed, as various groups have sought to influence the direction and agenda of the Niger Delta resistance. The use of mercenaries has also been reported;

Since 2006 other leaders of MEND's affiliate groups have reportedly included 'General' Brutus Ebipadei, 'General' Tamuno, 'General' Tompolo, Soboma George of the 'Outlaws', and Farah Ipalibo of the Niger Delta Strike Force (NDSF), among others (Wellington, 2007), including Gbomo Jomo.<sup>2</sup> At present, the groups like the Martyrs Brigade, the Reformed Niger Delta Volunteer Force (a breakaway faction of the Asari Dokubo's Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force) and MEND operate as the Joint Revolutionary Council (JRC), led by Cynthia Whyte. There are also reports that some fighters involved in MEND's operations are freelance – guns-for-hire individuals or mercenaries (Ebiri, 2008a). However, since September 2007, the MEND has split into two broad factions over differences on how to engage with the newly elected Nigerian government led by President Yar Adua. The new government had freed Asari Dokubo and former Bayelsa state governor Diepreye Alamieseigha from jail and these had been two of the requests included in MEND's original list of demands. MEND was also unsure how to respond to the arrest of a factional leader Henry Okah,<sup>3</sup> on allegations of gun running in Angola (Ashby, 2008) (Obi, Cyril I., 2008, 'Enter the Dragon? Chinese oil companies and resistance in the Niger Delta',

During 2008, violence within the Niger Delta initiated by MEND or other militant groups escalated with abductions and related deaths, as the US Department of State records;

Numerous hostage takings occurred during the year, including the abduction of 82 expatriates, five of whom continued to be held by their kidnappers at year's end. There were four expatriate fatalities in connection with attacks on oil facilities or hostage taking incidents. An estimated 400 persons (nationals and expatriates) were kidnapped in approximately 100 incidents during the year. Some kidnappings were perpetrated by militant groups trying to force the government to develop local economies, increase local control of oil revenues, or release prisoners; others were conducted for financial gain. Oil facility guards and JTF soldiers were among those killed in these incidents. During the year Niger Delta criminals continued to kidnap the relatives (usually children or mothers) of prominent state politicians for ransom or to force payment for services, such as protection details and voter intimidation, which were rendered during the elections. In some areas tensions remained high between oil producing communities and oil company employees and contractors.

#### Killings

On March 24, the JTF reportedly killed four men near Isaka in the Okrika Local Government Area, Rivers State, when they confronted them and other armed men attempting to hijack a barge. There was no investigation conducted.

On July 24, the JTF reportedly killed 12 suspected militants and arrested 48 others during an attempted crackdown in Bayelsa and Rivers states. No investigation of the incident occurred.

On August 30, a series of violent clashes erupted between the military and militant groups in Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers states, allegedly resulting in the deaths of 35 persons. Authorities did not investigate the killings.

On September 13, confrontations between the JTF and armed militants in the Elem Tombia and Ogboma communities of Rivers State resulted in an estimated 15-30 deaths, hundreds of displaced persons, and the destruction of homes and property worth millions of naira.

...There were no developments in the June 2007 incident in which JTF troops killed a dozen gunmen who were holding two dozen workers and soldiers hostage at a flow station run by Italian energy company Eni; the August 2007 incident in which the JTF launched a raid on an alleged hideout of militants who had been fighting in Port Harcourt for days, resulting in the deaths of at least 40 persons, including innocent civilian bystanders; or the September 2007 incident in which the JTF launched an attack on a suspected criminal hideout near Ogbogoro, Rivers State, using helicopter gunships and ground troops, resulting in an undetermined number of deaths.

Although the JTF perpetrated violence in some situations, some observers reported that the force added to the region's overall level of security by filling a void left by the ineffective NPF.

### ...Abductions

Militants and criminals abducted approximately 400 persons during the year, including women, children, foreign citizens, and an increasing number of prominent citizens or their family members. Many abductions took place at oil facilities despite the presence of armed guards and military police escorts.

On June 19, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) rebels claimed responsibility for an attack on Royal Dutch Shell's offshore Bonga oilfield and in the kidnapping of a U.S. citizen captain of a nearby supply ship. The captain was later released unharmed.

On July 24, armed men attacked a vessel off Bonny Island and kidnapped 11 Russians and one Ukrainian. Seven were released the next day and the remaining five were released on July 28.

On August 2, gunmen attacked a bar in Onne, Rivers State, and kidnapped two French expatriates, who were later released. The attack also resulted in three other deaths.

On September 9, unidentified gunmen seized the vessel "Blue Ocean" with a crew of 23 including five expatriates. One crew member was killed during the seizure. All other crew members were released, except for two British citizens who remained captive at year's end.

On November 3, armed gunmen kidnapped a Lebanese employee of a construction company, killing one and injuring two bystanders during the incident. The Lebanese employee was later released.

On December 2, two Russian employees of Aluminium Smelter Company of Nigeria were abducted from their housing compound in Akwa Ibom State. They had not been released by year's end.

### Other Conflict-related Abuses

Violent conflict between the JTF and Niger Delta militants resulted in forcible displacement of persons and substantial property destruction.

For example, on August 4, the 78th Battalion of the JTF stormed Agge in Bayelsa State in attempt to flush out armed youths who supposedly were hiding there, resulting in a gun battle that destroyed approximately 500 homes. Bayelsa State JTF Commander Lt. Col. Chris Musa claimed that the community was harboring the criminals and that the JTF was justified in its attack (US Department of State (US Department of State 2009, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2008 – Nigeria*, February, Section 1g, – Attachment 18).

During 2008, MEND repeated statements that it sought an international facilitator to bring about peace and a solution to the conflict. It proposed an offer to disarm MEND forces as part of an 11 point peace plan, which would be used in discussion with the Federal Government. The plan comprised the following 11 principles:

1. Henry Okah is to be held in good condition with unfettered access to his legal representatives, family, pastor and independent international observers including the international Red Cross;

2. In return Henry will assist the new peace process in the Niger Delta;
3. MEND will declare a period of Grace in which it will halt all militia action in the Niger Delta;
4. In return military forces will halt all actions and no further troops will be deployed in the Niger Delta;
5. During the Grace period a demobilization plan will be agreed between militia, the Federal Government of Nigeria and international observers with an emphasis on education, rehabilitation, counselling, training, apprenticeship, employment and small/medium scale business opportunities that will constructively engage the militia;
6. The Federal Government of Nigeria will begin a staged military withdrawal from the Niger Delta;
7. In return MEND will commit itself to a staged disarmament commensurate with the military withdrawal from the Niger Delta;
8. In the interest of public safety, the Federal Government of Nigeria will match military withdrawal with an increase in police wages, training, orientation, equipment and improvements in police living conditions. This will assist in moving Nigeria from a military regime to a true democracy with a civilian government;
9. The Federal Government in conjunction with the State Governments of the Niger Delta region will announce details of a plan to deliver greater transparency in revenues from Federal Government, to State Governments and on to Local Governments, and application of those funds to relieve the suffering of villagers... A monitoring group composed of officials nominated by the Government and the civil society, and supervised by the World Bank, as the model experienced in Chad, will be vouched for transparency;
10. The Federal Government will announce increased funds to specific programmes in communities aimed at relieving the suffering of the poor and disadvantaged citizens;
11. Last but not the least; the Federal Government must propose a time table for the practice of true federalism in the control of resources by every state in the federation.” (‘MEND proposes 11-point agenda for peace in Niger Delta’ 2008, *Vanguard*, 17 February, [http://www.vanguardngr.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=2490&Itemid=43](http://www.vanguardngr.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2490&Itemid=43) – Accessed 29 April 2009 – Attachment 19).

In September 2008, a Ministry of the Niger Delta was established, during the same month in which a week long ‘oil war’ during 13<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> September was conducted by MEND. The campaign was undertaken in response to armed forces attacked villages supposedly in a search for a MEND member Farah Dagogo;

The clashes—reportedly the heaviest in two years in the region—were sparked on September 13th when government security forces allegedly razed the villages of Soku, Kula, and Tombia, in Rivers state while looking for Farah Dagogo, a member of rebel MEND.

Ongoing insecurity has cut off access to parts of Rivers state, making it hard for disaster workers to count how many of the estimated 20,000 inhabitants in the three towns have fled, according to NRC.

Local human rights workers told IRIN they were caught in helicopter and boat gunfire. Sofiri Joad Peterside, a human rights campaigner in the Delta told IRIN, “These were aerial strikes without clear targets. What we are calling for right now is an independent assessor to determine the extent of civilian vulnerability to all these strikes.”

He said the violence hit civilians directly. “The centre of the violence was full of civilians. We live in riverine areas and in every riverine area, you have a forest where people go to pick seafood, and you have a community.” But Nigerian army spokesman, Emeka Onwuamaegbu, said the military did not carry out a full-scale offensive.

A government effort to reign in oil smuggling by shutting down 200 illegal oil refineries in the past two months sparked more fighting, according to the governmental Joint Military Task Force (‘Nigeria. “Oil War” launched’ 2008, *Africa Research Bulletin*, Vol. 45, No. 9, October, p. 17689, <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/117994797/issueyear?year=2008> – Accessed 29 April 2009 – Attachment 20).

Coventry Cathedral, a religious based centre for reconciliation, previously involved in other Nigerian mediation, agreed at MEND’s request in December 2007 to become involved in a peace dialogue and facilitated a Christmas cease fire in December of that year. A further request of Coventry Cathedral by MEND was made in July 2008 and whilst the former acknowledged that this would not make the involvement of an independent international facilitator superfluous, it agreed to accept the invitation and in consequence published its almost 300 page report in February of 2009 (see Attachment 5, e.g., pp. 34-35). However, MEND ended a five month ceasefire in February 2009, claiming that the Nigerian government and military “continue to act in bad faith” (‘Nigerian militants call off ceasefire from Jan 31’ 2009, *Reuters*, 31 January – Attachment 21). It subsequently rejected a disarmament proposal by Nigerian President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua as “unrealistic” and repeated the need for an internationally mediated peace settlement (‘Nigeria: MEND rejects Yar’Adua’s amnesty’ 2009, *All Africa* [source: Vanguard], 4 April, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200904040005.html> – Accessed 29 April 2009 – Attachment 22).

In April 2009, the International Crisis Group called on the Nigerian government to respond to the Technical Committee report on the Niger Delta, a report commissioned by the government and presented to it in December 2008, and which made a number of recommendations including a program for ‘demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration’ and additional oil income to the Delta. ICG also recommended the use of a UN or other independent facilitator, such as the Coventry Cathedral centre in negotiations between conflicting parties. The ICG expresses its concern about the likelihood of increasing instability in the region unless the government responds soon. The ICG report also provides additional information about other relevant developments (International Crisis Group 2009, *Nigeria: Seizing the moment in the Niger Delta*, 30 April – Attachment 41).

## **5. Is there any information about tension and/or disputes between MEND and NDPVF members? If so, is this still the case?**

In its extended 2006 report on the Niger Delta conflicts International Crisis Group noted that ‘internal conflict between militant groups is high’;

The group has made similar demands to those of Niger delegates at a government-convened National Political Reform Conference in 2005, namely that 25-50 per cent of oil revenues be dedicated to communities in oil-producing areas of the Niger Delta. The group has asked that the money be channeled through foundations controlled by communities rather than through corrupt state and local governments.

MEND spokesman Jomo Gbomo acknowledged in 2006 that it did collaborate with 'several other militant groups, including the FNDIC [Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities] and the NDPVF (International Crisis Group 2006, *Fuelling the Niger Delta Crisis*, 28 September, p. 6 – Attachment 23).

Along with others, Dokubo Asari has been critical of the lawlessness and criminality associated with various MEND activities, and in an interview in March this year, he rejected claims by MEND that the NDPVF had ceased to be relevant;

There is unanimity among all of us that these criminal activities in the Niger Delta must stop. Criminality is discrediting the struggle we sacrificed for. Some of us gave our lives, some of us lost our freedom. So, if there is unanimity on that. You don't see the face of the people you are talking. One man who nobody knows, who doesn't have any credential in the struggle just came up and talked, then the press will listen to him.

A man who has sacrificed, who has been in prison and who has gone through trials is talking... If they are doing the right thing, we will support them. But when they do the wrong thing, we will stand up against them. They stand condemned before man and before God because our struggle is a moral struggle and we cannot trade this moral platform for something else.

**In view of this, what then is the way forward in the crisis in the region?**

We have stated our position. Our minimum demand is a convocation of a Sovereign National Conference (SNC) and as long as the government in power does not want to do that, we will continue to strive. Our means of fighting the government will be on moral grounds. We will use the same corrupt weapons they used; weapons of operation, unlawful detention, extra judicial killings and mass murder.

We will not adopt the same instrument they have been using in fighting us because if we do that, we lose the support of God and men of goodwill. And these individuals are working in tandem with our oppressors, with the occupation force. They (MEND) went and attacked the military and they (military) attacked Agge. Did they go to defend Agge? Did they go there? They (military) reduced Agge to the grass. Did they go there? If they are so strong, why didn't they go and defend Agge? They ran away. So, the lives of Ijaw people, the lives of Isekiri and other Niger Delta people have become so cheap that every click of a second, our lives can be taken. Is it of no value again? ('Nigeria: MEND no longer relevant to Niger Delta struggle – Asari' 2009, *All Africa* [source: Vanguard], 7 March, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200903091118.html> – Accessed 28 April 2009 – Attachment 24).

In the Coventry Cathedral report referred to above the affiliations between various groups which operate under the umbrella of the Joint Revolutionary Council (JRC) formed in 2006 are summarised:

There is a loose coalition between MEND, NDPVF, Martyr's Brigade and the Outlaws who operate under the JRC (Joint Revolutionary Council). The JRC was formed in 2006 as an operational umbrella for MEND, COMA, NDPVF and Martyr's Brigade.

The Bush Boys (formed in 1999 to protect Okrika community), Greenlanders and Dey Bam appear to form an affiliation at various times. These groups are formed around Ijaw issues and are in one sense ethnic based groups.

The Bush Boys at times work closely with the Greenlanders which is a breakaway group formed from the Icelanders. Although they are a community inspired and community based vigilante group they do, at various times, work with cult groups (e.g. Greenlanders) and militia groups (e.g. NDPVF).

Although MEND is primarily an Ijaw militia group, and some would argue the military wing of FNDIC, it has strong relationships with groups commanded by some of the former NDPVF commanders who set up their own groups after Asari was gaoled in August 2005, notably Saboma George, Dagogo Farah (Prince Farah Ipalibo) and Boyloaf. Saboma and Farah operate primarily in Rivers State with little apparent interest in Bayelsa State.

MEND has close affiliations with Saboma George's Outlaws, the Martyr's Brigade and the Niger Delta Strike Force (NDSF). Meinbutu Boys which featured early in MEND has been largely integrated into MEND.

...The combined membership MEND, NDPVF, NDSF, Outlaws, Bush Boys, Greenlanders, Dey Gbam is over 10,000

#### **HEADLINES**

**Cult groups, gangs and militia often form alliances to conduct particular operations. The street cult group Dey Gbam (Dee Bam) often works with the NDPVF while the Icelanders/Germans and Dey Well (Dee Well) work with the NDV (NDVS).**

**Gang membership provides a brotherhood (hence a "fraternity"), a sense of belonging reinforced by strong cohesiveness. Gang membership provides identity and status.**

**The military era of General Babangida commencing in 1985 saw the recognition of the potential for gangs to be used as a political tool. Hence the explosion in campus groups which were funded and armed by politicians, security agencies and military leaders.**

**In various states vigilante groups that were formed to fight against gangs have themselves become feared by the public and been used to intimidate political opponents of their patrons.**

**While the leaders of the NDPVF and MEND firmly state that their respective organisations are not cult groups, from time to time street cult groups do co-ordinate with militia.**

**MEND and the NDPVF are the only two groups that could reasonably be considered to be militia groups** (Davis, Stephen 2009, *The Potential for Peace and Reconciliation in the Niger Delta*, February, p. 128, 132-133, published by Coventry Cathedral,

<http://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/about-us/our-reconciliation-ministry.php> – Accessed 28 April 2009 – Attachment 5).

**6. Please provide information about a hostage crisis in 21 September 2005 by members of the NDPVF protesting that their leader (Mr Asari) had been arrested for treason the day before.**

On Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2005, NDPVF leader Dokubo Asari was arrested in Port Harcourt for treason. This provoked protests by many NDPVF activists carrying guns and

machetes in the streets, and they called for his release within 48 hours. He was transferred to Abuja where he was subsequently questioned. His arrest came after threats by Ijaw youths to “attack British nationals and oil installations if Governor Diepreye Alamieyeseigha of Bayelsa State was not freed”. A number of businesses and oil companies including Shell Petroleum closed administrative offices in Port Harcourt the following day (‘Nigeria: Asari-Dokubo: Shell shuts N/Delta Offices’ 2005, *All Africa* [source: Daily Champion], 22 September, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200509220313.html> – Accessed 22 April 2009 – Attachment 26). Militant youths also seized control of a Rivers State based Chevron Nigeria Limited platform and disrupted production, also on 22<sup>nd</sup> September, but this was re-opened by 26 September (‘Nigeria: Ijaw youths seize oil platform’, 2005 *All Africa*, 23 September, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200509230003.html> – Accessed 22 April 2009 – Attachment 25).

Another NDPVF spokesman claimed on 23<sup>rd</sup> September that the organisation would suspend its threats to destroy oil installation facilities;

Alali Horsfall, who said he was the acting leader of the Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force in the absence of detained Mujahid Dokubo-Asari, said the group was suspending action which has already closed two production platforms and forced dozens of workers to evacuate.

Dakuro Princewill, who said he was also a member of the group’s Supreme Command, said a temporary cease-fire had been decided but some in the group disagreed and may not respect it.

“We, the Supreme Command, have decided a cease-fire,” he told Reuters. He had previously threatened to dynamite oil installations across the delta, which produce almost all of Nigeria’s oil output of 2.4 million barrels per day, unless Asari was released.

“We want the Nigerian state to release him. We will wait for some days up to a week, and if we are not seeing him, we will fight back,” said Princewill (‘Update 1 – Nigerian militia leaders say oil threat suspended’ 2005, *Reuters*, 24 September – Attachment 27).

Two oil workers from the UK and Ireland were kidnapped on 29<sup>th</sup> September in Warri;

The two men, who are employees of Canadian oil company Pan-Ocean, were snatched at 9:15pm local time in a bar opposite the company’s office in Warri, the largest city in Delta state.

“They went into a bar right opposite the office to have drinks and the men came in commando style and took them away in a van,” a Pan-Ocean spokeswoman said.

The kidnappers demanded a ransom of \$A506,813.

A military escort followed the kidnappers to a jetty in the city where a gunfight broke out in which the driver of the van died and two of the suspected kidnappers were arrested (‘Military pursues Nigerian hostage-takers’ 2005, *ABC News*, 29 September, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2005/09/29/1471479.htm> – Accessed 22 April 2009 – Attachment 28).

In subsequent reports it was stated by the operational commander of the patrol team that the hostages were taken for monetary gain, rather than as a means of exerting pressure on the government over the arrest of the NDPVF leader;

Confessions from the kidnappers: Yes, some of them have made some revelations. Initially, they claimed they were negotiating a job with the Pan Ocean through the white men they kidnapped. They mentioned some other reasons, which we did not accept. The bottom line is that these boys just did it for monetary reward. And then we asked them how much they would have demanded as ransom, they said they had not concluded that before we arrested them. But then, they were to ask for between N5 million to N10 million.

...And up till this moment, they are in a high state of readiness to handle any fallout from Dokubo's arrest. Let me also tell you that from the questions we have asked the kidnappers, their action was not in any way, linked to either the arrest of Governor Diepreye Alamieyeseigha or Asari Dokubo. These boys did it purely for monetary reasons but luck was against them ('Nigeria: How we rescued two expatriates hostages from kidnappers – JTF Commander, Brig. Gen. Zamani' 2005, *All Africa*, 9 October, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200510100159.html> – Accessed 29 April 2009 –Attachment 29).

## **7. What is the situation in Nigeria like for independent journalists in terms of press freedom and state protection?**

Nigerian authorities are sensitive to criticism and journalists and other media employees are frequently arrested and detained. Media outlets such as television and radio stations are sometimes temporarily prevented from broadcasting. A number of reports are included as follows:

### Human Rights Watch (2008)

Nigerian civil society and the country's independent press are generally free to criticize the government and its policies, allowing for vibrant public debate. However, journalists in Nigeria are at times subjected to arrest and detention. In September 2008 state security agents shut down Channels Television-one of Nigeria's largest private broadcasters-and arrested six journalists, including media executives, after the station reported that President Yar'Adua might resign from office due to health reasons. In October Nigerian security agents arrested and held without charge two US-based Nigerian online journalists who had published stories critical of the government. Local media outlets generally enjoy considerably less freedom than their national counterparts and are more often subjected to harassment and intimidation by government authorities. Government security forces continued to restrict journalists' access to the Niger Delta (Human Rights Watch 2009, *World Report Nigeria 2009*, 14 January – Attachment 30).

### Amnesty International (2006/2007)

Intelligence services in Nigeria have raided media outlets, stopping programmes, requisitioning tapes, intimidating, arresting or beating up journalists too critical of the government and the President. In the run-up of the elections of April, at least two journalists lost their lives in the widespread political violence. In the context of the mass protests of May Day 2007, organized to protest against the irregularities during the elections, local media have reported that a cameraman was beaten into a coma by the police, who also threatened other journalists with their guns. In another incident, 15 journalists were reported to have been rescued from an attempted lynching by a group of party supporters (Amnesty International 2007, 'Press Freedom Day: Global action needed to protect journalists', 3 May, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/feature-stories/press-freedom-day-global-action-needed-to-protect-journalists-20070503> – we20 – Accessed 22 April 2009 – Attachment 31).

### International Press Institute (2008)

In Nigeria, President Umaru Yar'Adua's government reacted strongly to critical media coverage, particularly relating to his health, a repeated source of rumours. In September, the government suspended Channels TV and State Security Services (SSS) held four of its staff members after the station mistakenly aired a hoax report that health reasons may prompt the president to step down. In late 2008, several staff members of an independent daily were interrogated by the SSS and then charged with libel for publishing an article claiming ill health forced the president to cancel official engagements and seek medical treatment from international doctors.

Two U.S.-based bloggers were held for questioning by the SSS in a crackdown on foreign-based political websites that specialise in Nigeria following the online publication of photos of the president's son. The oil-rich Niger Delta region also remained dangerous, with two documentary filmmaker teams detained and interrogated by state security before being released.

In October, radio journalist Eiphraim Audu, who was involved with the Nigerian Union of Journalists, was shot by six unknown gunmen near his home. In the meantime, no progress was made on the Freedom of Information bill, with the House of Representatives again deferring its consideration (International Press Institute (undated), 'World Press Freedom Review 2008 – Africa Overview',

[http://www.freemedia.at/cms/ipi/freedom\\_detail.html?ctxid=CH0056&docid=CMS1233676421599](http://www.freemedia.at/cms/ipi/freedom_detail.html?ctxid=CH0056&docid=CMS1233676421599) – Accessed 23 April 2009 – Attachment 32).

### Committee to Project Journalists (2007)

In many areas of Nigeria, local journalists operated amid violent conflict between ethnic, religious, and political factions. These challenges were especially stark in the southern Niger Delta, where militias, separatist insurgents, and armed criminal gangs battled the government for control of lucrative oil exports. Kidnappings of oil workers and shoot-outs between rival gangs were frequent; while journalists were not directly targeted, their ability to operate in the Delta was curtailed by general insecurity. For example, on June 5, two gunmen entered the bureau of the national newspaper *Punch* in the main Delta city of Port Harcourt and attempted to kidnap a staff member, who escaped by jumping out a window, according to the Lagos-based organization Media Rights Agenda. On July 25, gunmen stormed the Port Harcourt offices of the *National Point* newspaper, having apparently followed Michael Watts, a visiting professor from the University of California, Berkeley, from a nearby bank in the hopes of robbing or kidnapping him. The gunmen shot and wounded the professor and a security guard working for the paper. Watts' research concerned oil-related violence in the Delta region, Reuters reported.

...

One Lagos-based journalist who reported on energy issues told CPJ that while many Nigerian media outlets maintained correspondents in the Delta region, reporters were constrained by the difficulty of accessing remote areas and by the often-conflicting accounts given by law enforcement agencies and militant groups. Federal authorities were particularly sensitive to international media coverage of the Delta. The government lashed out at CNN in February after it broadcast a report on kidnappings, accusing the U.S.-based news channel of lacking balance and paying "criminals" to participate in interviews. CNN stood by its reporting (Committee to Project Journalists 2008, 'Attacks on the Press 2007: Nigeria', 5 February, <http://cpj.org/2008/02/attacks-on-the-press-2007-nigeria.php> – Accessed 22 April 2009 – Attachment 33).

### Reporters Without Borders (2007/2008)

Reporters Without Borders describes raids and other punitive action carried out the country's internal intelligence bureau, the State Security Service (SSS) in its 2008 report and calls the SSS a 'press freedom predator';

Police raids resumed from the start of 2007. Around a dozen SSS agents burst into the offices of the private daily, *Leadership*, in Abuja on the morning of 9 January leaving again a few minutes later having arrested the managing director, Abraham Nda-Isaiah, the editor, Bashir Bello Akko, and a journalist, Abdulazeez Sanni. The SSS had been looking for journalist Danladi Ndayebo, as well as a copy of an article which appeared on 6 January condemning political machinations within the ruling party that led to the choice of Umaru Musa Yar'Adua as candidate for the forthcoming presidential elections. The SSS agents returned in the afternoon to seal the premises, seize the mobile phones of everyone present and to search the offices. After finding what they were looking for, they left the ransacked premises along with the managing director. The three journalists were finally released in the middle of the night, but they were forced to reveal the whereabouts of Danladi Ndayebo. He was arrested the following day and held for ten hours, during which he apparently revealed the source of his information.

...

The privately-owned African Independent Television (AIT) was brutally treated by the SSS for a second successive year when on 17 April a commando stormed its Abuja offices days before the presidential poll and 48 hours after a suspicious fire damaged its Lagos offices. In the Abuja raid, the armed SSS agents ordered all the staff to lie on the ground. Before leaving, they took several tapes which were about to be broadcast, along with one which was currently being shown, about the eight-year history of civilian government under the outgoing president, Olusegun Obasanjo. The same SSS on 11 April forcibly closed the studios of private radio Link FM and the television station GTV, in Lagos, saying that it was acting on "an order from above"

Other groups are also a threat to Nigerian journalists, including some political militants, "the many uniformed corps in the country and governors' private militias" (Reporters Without Borders 2008, *Annual Report 2008 – Nigeria*, 13 February – Attachment 34).

### Media Foundation for West Africa (2006-2007)

In times of stability, the Nigerian media performs its traditional roles of informing, educating, and entertaining, and in times of crisis it sets the public agenda, moderates national discourse, exposes wrongdoings and wrongdoers, and publicizes their actions.

...

The year 2007 began with the State Security Service (SSS) invading the offices of the private daily *Leadership* in Abuja on January 9, where they made arrests and confiscated work materials including story manuscripts.

Nigerian journalists and media workers still faced an unrelenting barrage of assaults from individuals, governments and their agents, as well as the various arms of Nigeria 's security agencies, specifically the SSS and the Nigerian police. Federal and state governments used these agencies to punish journalists by arresting and keeping them in detention unnecessarily, sometimes with hardened criminals and in overcrowded cells. Most of these assaults were carried out with impunity. No attack on journalists or the media in 2007 was prosecuted, nor was any person or government agency brought to book for attacking the media. While some of the incidents were reported in the media, others went unreported (Media Foundation for West Africa 2008, *Media Alert West Africa 2006-2007*, pp. 53, 55,

The US Department of State noted in its most recent country information report that whilst the constitution and the law provided for freedom of speech and the press, these rights were restricted. During 2008, “there were reports that journalists were killed”;

On August 17, unknown assassins killed Paul Abayomi Ogundeji, a reporter for the privately owned *This Day* newspaper and member of its editorial board. The August 19 issues of two other papers, *The Punch* and *The Nigerian Compass*, quoted an unidentified source stating that a uniformed police officer shot Ogundeji. Although the NPF began an investigation, there were no further developments at year’s end.

On October 15, six unknown assailants shot and killed the chairman of the Credential Committee of the Nigeria Union of Journalists and Nasarawa State Broadcasting Service, radio journalist Eiphraim Audu in Lafia, Nasarawa State. An investigation was launched but provided no results by year’s end.

There were no developments in the 2006 killing by unknown assailants of Godwin Aybroko, editor and columnist of *This Day* newspaper in Lagos.

Security forces beat journalists. For example, on August 1, security operatives beat a Channels TV cameraman who attempted to take pictures of a raid on the house of Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force leader Asari Dokubo in Abuja. There were no additional developments at year’s end.

On September 4, police officers in Lagos reportedly beat three journalists, Adewole Ajayi from the *Nigeria Tribune*, Emmanuel Oladesu from *The Nation*, and Bimbo Ogunnaike with the *Nigerian Compass*, for attempting to cover an Action Congress (AC) political rally. The officers were escorting a politician from the AC. Joe Igbokwe, the AC Publicity Secretary in the State, offered an apology after the incident. No further action was taken by year’s end.

...

Security forces detained journalists and seized newspapers during the year. Several journalists were detained and their media outlets seized for reporting on President Yar’Adua’s health.

On January 24, Akwa Ibom State security operatives arrested Essien Asuquo Ewoh, a newspaper distributor in Uyo, and on January 27 arrested Sam Asowata, chairman of the editorial board of the weekly newspaper *Fresh Facts*. Police allegedly also ransacked *Fresh Facts*’ office. Both were charged with sedition and “conspiracy to distribute copies of *Fresh Facts* newspaper with the intent to bring hatred or contempt to the governor of the state” with a story about Akwa Ibom State Governor Akpabio’s alleged ties to corrupt persons. Ewoh and Asowata were later released.

In March the Kano State government arrested Hausa filmmaker Hamisu Lamido, known as Iyan Tama, for operating his company Iyan Tama Multimedia without registration and for releasing the film “Tsintsiya,” a Hausa adaptation of the film “West Side Story,” in Kano without having it first reviewed by the state censorship board. The trial initially was scheduled for May 12, but was moved to a new location without notification to the defendant, resulting in Lamido’s arrest for violation of bail by not appearing. Lamido was later released on bail and the trial was rescheduled. On December 30, a Kano magistrate court found Iyan Tama guilty and sentenced him to 15 months in prison and a 300,000 naira fine. Attorneys for the defendant filed an appeal to the High Court and the case was ongoing at year’s end.

On April 12, security forces arrested four U.S. filmmakers and one Nigerian for attempting to make a documentary about the effects of the oil industry on the Niger Delta region. Charges were later dropped and all five were released after four days in detention (US Department of State (US Department of State 2009, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2008 – Nigeria*, February, Section 1g – Attachment 18).

In 2003 Human Rights Watch also published a lengthy report on violations of media independence and attacks on journalists (Human Rights Watch 2003, 'Nigeria: Renewed Crackdown on Freedom of Expression', December – Attachment 36).

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UK Home Office <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

US Department of State <http://www.state.gov/>

European Country of Origin Information Network <http://www.ecoi.net>

#### **International News & Politics**

BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk>

The Economist <http://www.economist.co.uk>

#### **Non Government Sources**

UNHCR Refworld <http://www.refworld.org>

International Press Institute <http://www.freemedia.at/cms/ipi/>

Committee to Protect Journalists <http://www.cpj.org/>

Researchers without Borders <http://www.researcherswithoutborders.org/>

Media Foundation for West Africa <http://www.mediafound.org/>

#### **Region Specific Links**

All Africa.com <http://allafrica.com>

Africa Confidential <http://www.africa-confidential.com/home>

Africa Research Bulletin <http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/journal.asp?ref=0001-9844>

Sahara Reporters <http://www.saharareporters.com>

Legal Oil Website <http://www.legaloil.com>

Niger Delta Non Violent Movement <http://www.nigerdeltanonviolentmovement.org/>

African News Agency website <http://www.afrol.com/>

#### **Search Engines**

Clusty <http://clusty.com/>

Webcrawler <http://www.webcrawler.com>

Google Scholar <http://www.google scholar.com>

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FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIAC Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

ISYS (RRT Research & Information database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

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