

War- to-Peace Transition in the Niger Delta: Is Amnesty Working?

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Abstract: *Civil disobedience in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria had been a threat to the cooperate existence of Nigeria since the late 1960s and particularly in the early 2000s when several non-state actors became very active in resistance struggles against the Federal Government and multinational oil companies. A lot of peacebuilding programmes had consequently been implemented to curtail activities of militants in the area. The Amnesty Programme been implemented since 2009 for armed militants was the Nigerian Government's strategy to demilitarize the region and integrate ex-agitators into civil life after several years of combat engagement in order to allow for immediate and massive socio-economic reconstruction. The ex-combatants had deposited huge quantity of weapons as sign of peacemaking in that conflict-ridden region of Nigeria which in turn have reduced active and sustained physical combat. The Amnesty and peacebuilding programme ushered a regime of fragile peace, though did not translate into a better life for majority of the region's people for their grievances are still unaddressed. The objective of the work is to discuss the practical implementation of the Amnesty Programme, the challenges encountered, achievements made and areas of weaknesses. Lasting peace remains elusive, as renewed violence has began to cast shadows on the progress on the DDR front, and continue to raise questions on the prospect for sustainability of the tentative peace induced by the Amnesty in the region.*

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I. Introduction

All over the world disarming insurgents has been a major challenge for ending violent conflicts and for instituting peacebuilding processes (Adekanye, 1996; Colletta, Kostner, & Wiederhofer, 1996). In mid-2009, the late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, invoking Section 175 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, proclaimed an amnesty and unconditional pardon for all the armed militants in the Niger Delta region. The Amnesty and peacebuilding process involved embarking upon a three component programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) for persons that were involved directly or indirectly in the commission of offences associated with militancy in the Niger Delta, as a means for ending the protracted struggle involving several ethnic militants (Davidheiser & Nyiayaana, 2011).

The militants had been fighting with the Federal Government and multinational oil companies operating in the region over environmental despoliation, resource control and fiscal federalism since 1966 when Isaac Adaka Boro, a young Ijaw revolutionary leader and his men engaged the Nigerian state in a 12-day struggle in a bid to establish a self governing unit of the Niger Delta Republic (Asuni, 2009; International Crisis Group, 2009; Boro, 1982)..

Over the years, successful administrations in the country have instituted different programmes aimed at transition to peace, but these efforts had recorded minimal successes as the root causes of the struggle remained unaddressed (Ikelegbe, 2010). Instead, the government's response has merely been to flood the region with military troops to secure peace at all cost (Osaghae, 2011; Agbede, 2010). These struggles had left behind ripple effects on the well-being of Nigeria in particular and the international community as a whole

Before the Amnesty Programme was inaugurated, militancy in the region had taken a frightening dimension, ranging from oil theft, pipeline vandalism, attacks on oil flow stations to kidnapping of staff of the oil companies (Osah, 2014), such that by early 2009, these activities had contributed to reducing oil production to as low as 700,000 barrels per day (Oluwaniyi, 2011). Upon the declaration of the Amnesty, militants in the region were expected to lay down their arms, renounce militancy and agree to be part the peace process by signing unto the programme for rehabilitation and reintegration under a new and non-military based policy initiative aimed at bringing peace to that conflict-ravaged region. This was intended as a prerequisite for creating enabling environment to stabilize, consolidate security conditions for building on that peace and moving on while massive economic and social reconstruction was to commence (Obi, 2014; Nwankpa, 2014). In actual sense, the amnesty served as incentive for warlords to abandon power and insurgents to come out of hiding and be part of the civilian society.

The Amnesty and it component programmes was reminiscent of those designed for war-torn societies in comparative perspective (McEvoy & Mallinder, 2012; Molloy, 2011, Kingma, 1996) that was akin to what Adekanye (1996) aptly refers as:

confidence-building measures that nourish individual peace support operations, particularly those that focus on the most crucial issues of demobilization, disarmament, and the reintegration of long estranged groups into societies emerging from civil wars or acute national crisis (Adekanye, 1996:8).

Meanwhile, relief from attacks, the observed cessation of hostilities by militants who had signed on to the Government's peace experiment even within the shortest period of the programme's commencement had began to generate cautious optimism that a new dawn of peace was breaking out in the Niger Delta. But even where some progress had been achieved on the disarmament front, there still remained considerable problems in getting the leaders of former guerrilla formations rehabilitated, and tens of thousands of their followers reintegrated economically into the society. Naturally, the

Amnesty Policy along with the objectives, programmes and projects being executed under it had kindled huge interests in the new peacemaking and peacebuilding process being embarked on by the Nigerian Government in the Niger Delta.

II. War-to-peace transition

The process of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants plays a critical role in transitions from war to peace (Knight, 2004). This process involves a broad, fragile and complex process from peace agreement to demobilization and reintegration program for ex-combatants. According to Özerdem (2002) there is a close interrelationship between the successful disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants and the sustainability of peace-building processes. The success of that process in the long run determine whether the transition will bring about sustained peace or relapse into armed hostilities (Sisk, 2001; Kingma, 2000).

For a successful transition, there is need for a comprehensive change in terms of structure, orientations and attitudes; new institutional forms in place, and perception and orientations altered in order to manage and sustain the provisions of settlement, the requirements of conflict resolution, peaceful co-existence and peace. This therefore must involve social reconciliation, economic regeneration and poverty alleviation, natural resource management, security and stability and humanitarian assistance to displaced persons and other venerable groups Ikelegbe (2010). Transitions programs involve combatants who agree to lay down their weapons, the government that seek an end to the armed conflict and the communities that receive or reject the demobilized combatants. Thus, successful demobilization and reintegration program for ex-combatants is key to an effective transition (Le Billon, 2000; Colletta, Kostner, & Wiederhofer, 1996).

III. Theoretical Consideration

The theory adopted for this study and based on the conceptual scheme about sustainability of peace is the Balance of Forces (Adekanye, 1997; 2001), although it was with the “post-military state” that that earlier version of the theory was concerned (Adekanye, 1984). The theory deals with the sustainability question about peace which all post-conflict societies face generally. The essence of the “balance of forces”-informed theory, on sustainability of peace, is about minimizing the role of ‘spoilers’ in the peace process, which include the ‘possible losers’ and/or ‘rejectionists’ from a given peace process and the war-lords with huge investments in the previous war-economy on the one hand, and maximizing the momentum for peace generated by the more positive factors and forces, including the sense of war-weariness and new interests in and orientations towards conflict resolution through non-violent means, on the other hand, or better still, about finding out which of these constellations of factors or forces are more dominant in a given post conflict scene.

Operating on the post-transition stage and as against those potentially destabilizing social forces are other interests and values that work to neutralize the strength of the former, and by implication to enhance the prospects for sustainable peace, security, democratic consolidation, and development. These other “countervailing interests, forces, and values” working to promote peace, and identified by Adekanye (1997:364-5) include the following among others: Emergent democratic institutions, processes, and sentiments (not necessarily limited to conventional Western-style liberal democracy, but including other forms as well); New interests in and orientations towards conflict resolution through non violent means; Ease and rapidity with which post-conflict governments are able to adapt and respond to demands for broad-based participation by all sectors of society (classes, organized interests, nationalities, and ethnic groups) as stakeholders in the polity; New safeguards for controlling the armed forces and the means of violence they control, by assuring their transformation into instruments of a democratic state; Role of parliamentary committees, civil society groups, etc, in ensuring accountability and transparency of the new political and military institutions towards the public (security sector reform); Sense of war-weariness, and how deep and widespread (i.e. whether the initial expectations about peace as a desirable end in itself still hold); and to what extent and how long this can be sustained, or even manipulated, to make the spectre of a ‘return to war’ generally unacceptable (i.e something to be avoided at all costs); The new supportive global environment, pushing for conflict resolution, peace, democracy, and human rights; Above all, level of performance, that is whether the authorities are able to tackle urgently the gargantuan post-war reconstruction task facing them as well as (re)distribute the ‘fruits’ of the peacebuilding process/post-liberation struggles, when, and how.

In assessing the reversal of given transition’s fortunes and outcomes, the signals to look for in comparative setting, and possibly for counteracting these relate to where the balance tilts between those negative and positive forces, that is whether the positive forces outweigh the negative ones. The future of a given transition’s outcomes and consolidation of its gains is assured, the theory postulates, if those positive forces are greater than the negative factors. The converse, or opposite, is the case, where and when those “important social forces posing potential threats to peace” exercise stronger influence than the “countervailing interests, forces, and values” working to promote peace, so concludes the theory. Upon closer and careful scrutiny, it may be noticed that elements embodying Adekanye’s “balance of forces” conceptual scheme just summarized are not meant to be exhaustive, but can be broadened to include such other concerns as ‘justice’ versus ‘reconciliation’, as well as ‘power-sharing’ versus ‘inclusiveness’. After all, while those two contrasting sets of concerns may not appear formally included above, issues of ‘justice’, ‘reconciliation’, ‘power-sharing’ and ‘inclusiveness’ have been central to all the theoretical essays combined with empirical studies where the author first broached and subsequently refined the theory about ‘balance of forces’ (Adekanye, 2007; 2001; 1997; 1996).

IV. Activities Regarding the Phases of the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme

As discussed in the introductory session, the amnesty programme had three basic components namely disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) which involved acceptance of the amnesty by the militants and letting go ties with former bands of violence, then getting back into civil society with reinsertion packages. The preceding discussions highlight the implementation of the individual phases of the programme.

The first programme been disarmament commenced June 25, 2009 to October 4. At the end of the moratorium over 20,000 militants were disarmed and registered. The highest numbers of the ex-militants registered during the first phase of the disarmament exercise came from Rivers State, with 6,997, closely followed by those of Bayelsa State origins, with 6,961, and those from Delta with 3,361. The others came from the other Niger Delta six states. This number included 133 women, but no record of child soldiers (NDAP, 2009). At the end of the exercise 18 gunboats, 299,032 rounds of ammunition, 3,831 weapons, 4,377 magazines, 2,072 explosives, and a number of rocket launchers were reported to have been surrendered by the militants to the Government security agencies (Oluwaniyi, 2011). In November 2010, a second phase of 6,166 came from a number of militant groups that claimed to be disarmed after the period of the grace had elapsed. Consequently, the number rose to 30,000 in December 2012, when another 3,642 were included to the programme as the third phase (Agbede, 2010; Akpan, 2010). Ubhenin (2013) argue that the disarmament process was not holistic in nature for it left arms in the hands of many militants and excluded the stockpiles of arms in the communities. This may have accounted for the resurgence of crimes in the post-amnesty era in the region. For those reasons, Ikelegbe (2010) concluded, that this exercise could not have succeeded in achieving complete and comprehensive.

The second component which is demobilization of the disarmed militants was to have commenced immediately after the October 2009 disarmament exercise, but lay in comatose until May 2010 due to the sudden medical trip of President Yar'Adua to Saudi Arabia and his consequent death. Participants were moved to the demobilization camp by the Amnesty Implementation Committee and expected to spend at least two weeks at the rehabilitation camp in batches. The reason for the phased camping was to adequately carry out intensive non-violence transformational training and reorientation programme per batch of about 1,000 to 1,500 ex-militants. The transformational/reorientation activities in the camp were to extinguish the belief violence and provide another alternative tailored to achieving the objectives outlined in conformity with international best standards (Akinwale, 2009). A centre at Ojuba in Cross River State was chosen as a single processing camp. The camp was officially opened on June 28, 2010. Militants who disarmed in the first phase were admitted to camp in a total of 17 batches (Ojum, 2011).

The third and final process is the reintegration/reinsertion programme involved re-engaging the combatants into the social and economic aspects of society. Government agencies and major stakeholders including civil society groups, donor partners and local and international NGOs were to partner in driving this phase of the programme through. The ex-militants were to develop potentials in lucrative and sustainable economic ventures including educational pursuits to enable them live economically productive lives after years of combat (Mbalisi, Eheazu, Kiyenowei, 2012). Placement into the various skills acquisition/vocational programmes was based on expressed interests and performance in placement evaluations for pipeline welding, underwater welding, ocean diving, crane operations, aviation, boat building, oil drilling, automobile technology, fish farming and entrepreneurship as well as formal education. Other available vocations included commercial pilot, aircraft engineering, grounds handling operations and air traffic control (Sunday Vanguard, March 23, 2014; NDAP, 2009).

Of those who opted to further their education, 711 were sent to universities/colleges in several countries around the world to study various courses including: Law, Political Science, Business Management, Mass Communication, International Relations, Public Administration, Accountancy, Information & Communications Technology, Medicine, Engineering, Applied Sciences, Radio Electronics, Building and Construction Technology in Benin Republic, Ghana, South Africa, Kenya, United States of America, United Kingdom, Malaysia, Romania, United Arab Emirates, India, South Korea, Russia, Cyprus, Belarus, Italy and Turkey, Israel, Sri Lanka, The Philippines as well as Trinidad and Tobago, Greece, and Canada. Another 2,334 are still undergoing training within Nigeria. About 2,922 delegates had already graduated from the offshore centres while 5,145 had completed vocational training within the shores of Nigeria (Amnesty News, 2012).

Table 1 Reintegration Progress Report

In training	Graduated from skill acquisition	
Vocational	Off shore	2,922
Offshore 1,431	On shore	
On shore 1,341	Welding/Fabrication	2,350
	Entrepreneur	2,709
	Pipe fitting	75
	Carpentry& Plumbing	140
	Oil drilling& marine related courses	823
	Electrical installation	189
	Information Communication Technology	225
	Crane duty operation	912
	Boat building	149
	Others	440
Total		5,145
	Total	8,067
Educational		
Off shore 711		
Onshore 466		
Remedial 90		
Total		1,267

Source: Author's compilation, 2013

So far, about 200 Nigerians have either been trained or are in training under the Presidential Amnesty Programme's aviation programme, 48 are already commercial pilots, of this 21 are currently undergoing specialization training at the Lufthansa Aviation College in Germany while 9 others are at CAE Oxford in England, and still others are

undertaking helicopter training in Egypt and Italy (Sunday Vanguard, March 23, 2014). Thus, David Mark Nigeria's Senate President in 2012 had course to say that 'the Aviation College in Nigeria has not trained more than 250 pilots since inception in 1964, but the Amnesty Programme has within two years trained close to 200 pilots' (Amnesty News, 2012).

Upon completion of one's vocational training, the Amnesty Implementation Committee promised that beneficiaries would not be given cash, but the tools and equipment needed to start up their own businesses around the Niger Delta or any place they chose within Nigeria. These businesses were to be monitored and evaluated for at least 12 months using log books and monthly reports to access progress. Most of the trainees had completed their programmes. A few of them have already secured job placements through the assistance of the Presidential Amnesty Office (See Table 2). But, the general problems of unemployment in the country still pose its challenges. The problem of economically reinserting beneficiaries and indeed the teeming youths of the region in gainful productive ventures still persist (Ubhenin, 2013).

Table 2 Details of locations where these are retained and the numbers

No	Training centre	Course	Location	No. of delegates
1	Proclad Academy (ICNPD)	Welding & Fabrication	UAE	30
2	Century Energy Group	Marine, Diving, Sea Faring	Nigeria	40
3	Plants & Processing Service	Welding & Fabrication	Nigeria	4
4	Ashland Investment	Welding & Fabrication	South Africa	5
5	Learning Resources	Welding & Fabrication	Ghana	10

Source: PAP (2013)

V. Gains of the Amnesty Programme

The implementation of the amnesty programme has elicited mixed reactions among commentators and scholars. Some say the programme has been a relative success. Oluwaniyi (2011), Egwemi (2010) say, the programme's implementation and response to security stabilization has been fairly successful. As Ajaero (2010) says:

For those who actually know the cost of violence and the quantity of arms and ammunition in the region, the decision of the repentant militants to embrace peace is one of the best things that have happened to the country in 2009. A state of war has been averted by their decision to lay down arms. This is a great act of patriotism (Ajaero, 2010).

In a way the Amnesty Programme had presented a unique opportunity to build capacity of the youths as well as reintegrate agitating youths of the Niger Delta into the mainstream Nigeria as a confidence-building strategy while gradually addressing the root causes that necessitated the conflict in the first place. Thus Kuku (2012) though government personnel expressed satisfaction on the programme's implementation, when he said that 'the Amnesty is saving lives and saving Nigeria from political and economic grief'.

The amnesty introduced a milieu of induced fragile peace. The security situation stabilization has given opportunity for fixing decaying infrastructures. Thus, Hon. Kingsley Kuku, Chairman of the Presidential Amnesty Programme while addressing newsmen in a press conference in Abuja on Feb 9th 2012 outlined the benefits of the Amnesty Programme to include: entrenching peace in the creeks, drastically reducing the menace of kidnapping, destruction of oil facilities and increase in the nation's quota of oil production. The amnesty programme has brought with it temporary respite from the activities of various youth militia groups in Niger Delta region. That temporary respite have imparted positively on the oil companies with increased daily production of the crude oil. The result is that Nigeria's oil production increased from 700,000 barrels per day to 2.4. With this, increase, Nigeria has resumed its position of meeting its OPEC quota and would meet its contractual obligations.

The amnesty and consequent transformation of militants of former militants necessitated partnership in humanitarian services during the 2012 floods that engulfed several states of Nigeria, the ex-militants contributed two thousand Naira each from their monthly stipend amounting N52.7 million to procure relief materials in order to alleviate the deplorable situation which the flood created (Osah, 2014).

VI. Challenges and Weaknesses of the Amnesty Programme

Despite the successes recorded so far, there are challenges facing the implementation of the Amnesty Programme. Osah (2014), Nwajiaku-Dahou (2010), Ikelgbe, 2010 had catalogued the many challenges facing the implementation of the amnesty programme to include:

i) Refusal by prominent militants to be part of the Amnesty Programme

The first challenge of the Amnesty Programme at its commencement was that some militants were skeptical of its logical implementation (Ikelegbe, 2010). Asari-Dokubo had particularly advanced the argument that he was not a criminal but a fighter for justice, therefore did not need Amnesty to walk as a freeman in the streets. After all, it was after the amnesty of 2004 that he was tricked to visit Abuja for a peace talk, only to be detained for several months without trial. Akete Tom demanded the withdrawal of the Joint Task Force (JTF) troops from the region as a condition for surrendering his weapons. Tompolo demanded for an extension of the deadline by additional three months, this the government did not oblige. Henry Okah had also said he was not going to be part of the amnesty initially (Ogbuenyi, 2009).

ii) Continuing Shadow of the "spoilers"

The "spoilers problems" initially posed by a few of the top leaders of the militia formations continues to cast shadow on the Amnesty-induced peace process. For instance Akete Tom and Chief Government Ekpemupolo alias "Tompolo" had been adamant until just few hours before the expiration of deadline of the Amnesty on October 1 and October 4, 2009 respectively, including Henry Okah, acclaimed leader of MEND who was arrested in Angola and later deported to Nigeria in February 2008 and charged with 62 counts of treason, terrorism, illegal possession of firearms and

arms trafficking and subsequently sentenced to 24 years imprisonment. Okah, MEND's "Master of Arms," had been indicted by the report of the Board of Inquiry convened by the Chief of Army staff (late Lt. General Luka Yusuf) to investigate a huge theft of arms at 1 base Ordnance Depot in Kaduna (1BODK), the Ordnance Sub Depot (OSD) in Jaji and Ordnance Field Park (OFP) in Calabar since 1999 (Adeniyi, 2011).

Till date Asari Dokobo leader of the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF) had refused to accept the Amnesty because he claimed he had not been a criminal. He had been quoted to have made insinuating comments on the relative peace been experienced in the Niger Delta to the continuous stay of their son President Goodluck Jonathan as the country's president. 'General' John Togo was another known spoiler after the 2009 Amnesty. He gathered around himself other fighters who did not accept the Amnesty. His operational base was located near Ayakuroma in Delta State. His group the Niger Delta Liberation Force (NDLF) became effective in 2010 but soon crushed by the JTF in May 2011. He came to be the militants' 'last man standing' in the post-Amnesty period. During that brief period the group engaged in oil bunkering and attacked and damaged several oil installations.

iii) Inherent Dangers of a "War-to-Peace" Process Tied to Personalities

As we showed earlier, the late President Yar'Adua and his deputy, Goodluck Jonathan came to exercise a crucially important, albeit personal, influence on the transition from conflict to the current Amnesty-induced peace process in the Niger Delta. Just like the "pacted" transition for ending military rule and bringing Chief Obasanjo to the presidency in 1999 (Adekanye, 2004; 1999) and not unlike the late President Yar'Adua's own ascension to the office along with that of his deputy in 2007, the transition from conflict to the current Amnesty-induced peace process had involved the Presidency in negotiating and striking deals with some of the top militant leaders, perhaps with some prodding from other key stakeholders and interests including major oil companies, and external powers. But, as those earlier discussions also showed, the combined Personal initiatives taken by both late President Yar'Adua and Vice-President Jonathan was crucial to the breakthrough achieved to the Amnesty process. The factor continued to be important even after the death of Yar'Adua in office since his subsequent successor, President Jonathan had been part of the deals previously negotiated, besides being himself a native of the Niger Delta and perceived by both sides as one of the militants- own "son" in the government. This raises the critical question as to what will befall the Amnesty-induced peace process if and when President Jonathan is no longer in office.

Already, discordant notes about what would happen after 2015 should President Jonathan not contest and win a re-election into office. The inherent dangers of tying given peace processes to the personality of particular leaders, however powerful, are already beginning to show in the present Nigerian case under the Presidential Amnesty Programme and considerable uncertainty and indeterminacy surrounding the conditions of its successes. Discordant notes are already palpable in the air. For instance Asari-Dokubo says:

I want to go on to say that, there will be no peace, not only in the Niger Delta, but everywhere if Goodluck Jonathan is not president by 2015, except God takes his life, which we don't pray for. Jonathan has uninterrupted eight years of two terms to be president, according to the Nigerian constitution. We must have our uninterrupted eight years of two tenures. I am not in support of any amendment of the constitution that will reduce the eight years of two tenures that Goodluck Jonathan is expected to be president of Nigeria. For very long time, our resources from the Niger Delta has been used to feed and fund Nigeria, and some people are still feeling that Nigeria is their personal property, and they can manage it the way they like, but those days are gone forever, it can never come back again. The reason there is relative peace in the country, especially in South-South geo-political zone currently is not because of the amnesty granted to Niger Delta ex-militants by late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's regime in 2010, but Jonathan's presidency (Asari Dokobo, 2013).

iv) Problem of unreported arms

Peace, lack of shooting war may have taken hold, but violent criminality is not necessarily reducing. This may be partly due to the legacy of long conflict but also partly due to large quality of unreported arms (i.e.) arms not handed in by demobilized soldiers but held in some underground cache. Hiring of these unreported arms is a lucrative business (Adekanye, 2007; 2001; 1997; 1996). At demobilization, Adekanye (2007) observes that:

a typical soldier tends to possess at least four to five guns at the point of demobilisation; and when disarmed, s/he tends to turn in one gun, while hiding the remaining others perhaps some private underground cache somewhere. There may not be need to resort to the use of these illegally stocked 'surplus weapons' if the ex-soldiers is properly reintegrated and the sustainable means of livelihood and the society faces no prospects of 'return to war'. Let none of those conditions hold, and the owner of those illegally stocked weapons finds the need to bring these back into circulation for use (Adekanye, 2007:196).

There are strong indications that the Amnesty left arms in the hands of many militants, who were not demobilized, thus the propensity to greater sabotage, vandalism, cultism, kidnapping, killings and protests. Joseph (2010) says though several arms and ammunitions were turned in by the militants, it is certainly low and inadequate when compared with the militants that registered for the Amnesty Programme. Hence some believe that the resurgence of militancy in the regions is a reflection of the failure of the Amnesty Programme.

There has been gradual return of criminality and violence in the post-amnesty era, which has begun to cast a doubt if militants truly surrendered all the weapons in their possession (Ikelegbe, 2012). New militants' camps have begun to resurface already in the region. Many militants who were not well paid by the executors of the programme are finding their way back to the creek (Ubhenin, 2013). This resurgence of militant camps fuels oil bunkering, electoral violence, kidnapping, piracy, arms trafficking, petty crimes and other security challenges which unemployed youth take advantage of to make a living. Efforts to address the security driving forces tend to be undermined by weak capacity of the security forces to control the illegal activities (Anaesoronye, 2013; Francis, LaPin & Rossiaco, 2011).

However, the insecurity that had threatened the nation's economy cannot come to an end immediately with the 'euphoria' of the Amnesty. For the Amnesty to make meaning impact, massive development, corrupt practices of state

leaders, irresponsibility of the MNCS, poverty, neglect which formed part of the root causes of the conflict must be addressed (Aaron & George, 2010; Ikelegbe, 2010).

vi) Unmet Grievance: The grievances of the region against environmental insecurity, underdevelopment and distributive justice in the oil rents are not yet addressed (Aghedo, 2013). Thus Ikelegbe (2010) states that the Government was not ready for broad and meaningful dialogue on the issues at the root of the crisis and pretending to be talking peace, but was actually arming and equipping the military through hardware purchases for a military onslaught. Meanwhile, the reasons for militia fighting have not been addressed. As well the JTF deployment was still intact and constituted a threat to militants during the 60 day moratorium. Ikelegbe further stated that the extant reports of commissions and committees on the region were not been implemented.

VII. Prospects of Peace Consolidation and Post-conflict Stability

What the combination of challenges analyzed above portends are greatly worrying signals for sustainability and consolidation of the peace that the Amnesty Programme had envisaged when it was launched. Of course, the other consideration that is going to prove useful for achieving peace consolidation and post-conflict stability here is whether, and to what extent, the tentative progress in demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (i.e. on the Amnesty implementation front) is matched by commensurate progress in repairing the physical and psycho-social damage of war, infrastructural development, reduction of unemployment and poverty (meaning social and economic reconstruction). Ultimately, as most scholars on war-to-peace transition have demonstrated, it is the most crucial factor on which hangs the peace and orderly development of any post-conflict society (Ikelegbe, 2010; Adekanye, 1996; Sisk 2001; Kigma, 1996).

VIII. Conclusion and Recommendations

The Niger Delta Amnesty Programme is relatively successful judging from other DDR experiences launched elsewhere by the international community in war torn societies, but the peace been experienced is fragile. Given that there are numerous flaws the Niger Delta DDR has recorded good success in regarding the three components. The increase in Nigeria's quota of oil production is a result of reduced incidence of kidnapping, which provides the right environment for the repairs of oil and gas infrastructures damaged during the period of militant agitation (Mbalisi, Eheazu & Kiyenowei, 2012; Kuku, 2012; Oluwaniyi, 2011).

More so, the tentative peace has provided ample opportunity for local and expatriate contractors who previously relocated and abandoned various projects to other regions and countries to return and fast-track sustainable development in the Niger Delta Region. International organizations were not involved in the amnesty. Such involvement would build trust and reputation that can guarantee security and safety of what has been promised. The challenges if not well managed could reignite and result into destabilization of the achieved relative peace.

On how to reduce the inherent dangers of tying Amnesty Programme to personalities of key political and militant individuals however important, efforts must be made to deepen process, by getting other major stakeholders to 'own' the peace. The non-militant elements of various communities in the Niger Delta must be involved and their own stakes and interests emphasized in the building of peace. If this is not done, the tentative peace induced by the Amnesty Programme may unscramble even before 2015.

For dealing with "spoilers" in and/or "possible losers" from the peace process, there is need for a continuous dialogue with the former militia groups identified by the study as "spoilers" in and/or "possible losers" from the Amnesty process, given (a) the standing risk they constitute; (b) incapacity of the authorities from Federal through States to Local Government to use force to get them to submit to the Amnesty-induced peace. More so, as with such others regarding 'war-to-peace' transition research projects (Sisk, 2001; Adekanye, 1996; Kingma, 1996) has been that 'demobilization' has not been accompanied by 'effective disarmament'. Thus, creative strategies (e.g. 'cash for guns'; institution of peace and stability committees at community levels to take charge of ownership, control and use of weapons; etc.) will be needed to deal with the suspected large quantity of unreported arms diffused throughout the region. These illegally stocked "surplus" weapons are known to pose continuing security threats in any post-conflict society. Arms mop-up exercise and demilitarization of the Niger Delta region should be another priority on the Federal Government's policy agenda.

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