

IMPACT OF ILLEGAL OIL BUSINESS AND NIGERIA ECONOMY: THE EXPERIENCE OF CRUDE OIL THEFT, BUNKERING AND PIPELINE VANDALISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY

DOMINIC, A. AKPAN, *PhD*

Department of History and International Studies,
University of Uyo, Nigeria.

E-mail: dominicakpanhistory@gmail.com

GSM: +234-8035806603

Abstract

Crude oil is one of the basic commodities of trade that command respect in the international market. It has and still is bringing wealth to the nations that have it in abundance. Of recent it has become a source of conflict in most nations such as ours because it turns in billions of Naira that would have changed the lives of many Nigerians for the better, but that would not be. Many youths who are struggling to eke a living are being sponsored by well placed Nigerians to engage in oil theft through oil pipeline vandalism and illegal bunkering. In the process thousands of barrels of crude and refined oil are daily being stolen at various points especially in the Niger Delta. That is a lost of heavy revenue for the country. The paper discovers that insecurity, lack of patriotism, greed, are responsible for the oil theft; besides some security agents sent to protect the oil installations and check bunkering activities become part of the obnoxious business. It also notes that oil pipeline vandalism and bunkering are counter-productive, slows down the economy and reduces international investment and by extension dent the image of the nation in the international system. The paper recommends that youths in areas where the pipelines passes through and those on the creeks are in better position to protect the pipelines since they know the corners and are familiar with the terrain than the security agents. There is mass unemployment among youths, many youths would be willing to do the surveillance, hence be contracted for the job. Traditional rulers, and other community leaders know their people, they should be made to account for any disruption on oil pipelines – their certificate and stipends withdrawn if oil theft is recorded in their domains.

Introduction

Since the beginning of this century the issue of oil pipeline vandalism and illegal oil bunkering are becoming a recurring decimal in economic, social policy discourses within the Nigerian state owing to its evil impact on the nation. Fortunately for the country, it is blessed with abundant wealth especially mineral wealth both liquid and solid, such as: crude oil, gold, feldspar, clay, limestone, tin, columbite etc. and fertile arable land for agriculture. Indeed, crude oil has brought and still bringing in so much wealth to the nation since the 1970s, but the wealth is being mismanaged; for it is for the benefit of a few. Even the Niger Delta Region which the oil wealth is derived from is worst off in terms of modern and adequate infrastructure, education and the general living conditions of the people. The process, therefore, usually sparked off conflict with the multinational companies and the federal government on one hand and the owners of the land mainly the youths on the other. Thus kidnapping of oil workers, oil theft, destruction of oil pipelines by land owners to show their disenchantment become a common scene. It also witnessed the emergence of unconventional

refineries in the creeks of the Niger Delta. These illegal activities as some people put it, are as a result of declining livelihoods of Nigerians especially the youths caused by hunger, poverty and unemployment; while others see it as a result of greed. The resultant effects of this illegal oil business are the incalculable loss of revenue by the government, environmental pollution, and low level of international investment and general insecurity of lives and property.

History of oil Pipeline Vandalism and Illegal Bunkering

Oil pipeline vandalism and bunkering is not a recent phenomenon in the world. It has been experienced many years ago in oil producing countries of Russia, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela etc. In Nigeria, it began in the early 1970 and reached its peak and alarmingly in the 1990s and it is progressing till date.

Reasons for Oil Pipeline Vandalism and Bunkering in Nigeria

For people who think well for this country's development, oil pipeline vandalism and oil bunkering are disturbing factors because the Nigerian economy revolves around oil revenue. On the same corollary not all quantity (crude oil refined) that crushes out of the punctured pipelines are collected, a large quantity too is usually being spilled on the land, which in the long run degrades the land and render it useless for agricultural purposes. A large portion too is spilled into water which causes water pollution. The effect is enormous on aquatic lives and in turn affects the living conditions of people who depend on water resources.

Meanwhile, since the 1980s Nigeria witnessed a dramatic negative turn in the economy. The economy became coercive and near stagnation thus plunge the nation into want. The reason for Nigeria's woes was as a result of the neglect of agriculture that was the mainstay of the economy before the oil boom. Besides, in spite of the so much revenue coming in from oil, Nigeria economy was not diversified. On the other hand, a lot of youths refused to learn trade hoping to pick-up a white-collar job-often times of non-existence.

Currently, Nigeria has a population of about 170 million as projected by the National Population Commission. The former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria Mallam Sanusi, now the Emir of Kano, argued that about 70 per cent of the 170 million Nigerians live below the poverty line – translated to mean that 105 million are in this position; and a little above 45 million live above \$1 a day. Those poor Nigerians cut across youths, women and elderly men. It is also estimated that more than 12 million out of the 160 million Nigerians are unemployed and underemployed, youths and women form the bulk of this figure and a large number of them lack access to credit facility. To further expatiate – 49.9 per cent of youths within the age of 15 and 25 years are residing in urban areas and have no jobs while 39.6 per cent of their counterparts in rural areas are also not employed (Yusuf, 2011; Akpan and Akpan, 2012). From the above it is discovered that the youths who normally make up the productive sector of the economy are unemployed. In this connection, some of these youths now become pawns in the hands of few wealthy people who manipulate and engage them in criminal activities during elections – they engage in election rigging through carrying of ballot boxes, in kidnapping for ransom in pipeline vandalism and bunkering among others. The examples abound where unemployed and poverty stricken youths are used for criminal intentions or actual crimes. According to Pat Akeem, a Brigadier General and Head of Monitoring Team on pipeline Vandalism commented thus:

Those involved in illegal oil bunkering and vandalism are mostly the unemployed youths in the communities. They are used by highly placed and well-connected individuals in government and international circles. The youths are employed by them to do the dirty jobs. Some youths too are capable of doing the business for themselves (Punch, February, 2013, P. 17)

In the same vein, some Nigerians who are poor and are opportuned usually collude with foreigners to puncture Nigeria's development through stealing of oil through pipeline vandalism and bunkering. For example, an Indian company, Prism Still Mill Limited, with two Indians and three Nigerians colluded and damaged an oil pipeline in Okene, Kogi State in February 2013 (Punch, February 21, 2013, P. 17).

Who are these Pipeline Vandalists?

The vandals are not the street urchins commonly called Area Boys; they are well-heeled criminals often armed with information, technical data, skill and sophisticated weapons. They are people who can afford to hire tankers and barges. According to Funsho Kapolokum, that as at 2006, vandalism has increased in both frequency and volume of products and crude oil lost. That from 1,121 cases in 2000, it increased two folds to 2,258 in 2005. He further added that, the NNPC recorded a loss of over 650,000 metric tonnes of oil to theft, through pipeline vandalism in 2005 alone. The vandals and thieves of Nigeria oil are also found among some members of the Petrol (Tanker Drivers branch of the National Union of Petrol Tanker Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG), some products marketers, some security agents and some Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) personnel (Gbadamosi; Kupolokun; Oluleye, 2008).

Indeed, it is also agreed that pipeline vandalism and bunkering are caused by the state of underdevelopment of the people generally. The concept of underdevelopment was initially meant or indicated that existing resources within a territory had not been exploited. Now the term closes in meaning to 'poverty' although some oil-rich underdeveloped countries have high incomes which are enjoyed by a few. Indicators of underdevelopment include high birth rates, high infant mortality, undernourishment, a large agricultural and small industrial sector, low per capita, high levels of illiteracy, and low life expectancy (Mayhew, 1992). Todaro and Smith (2009) see underdevelopment as an economic condition in which there exists persistent low levels of living in conjunction with absolute poverty, low income per capita, low rates of economic growth, low consumption levels, poor health services, high death rates, high birth rates, dependence on foreign economies, and limited freedom to close among activities that satisfy human wants. Rodney (1972) sees underdevelopment as increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. Development partly implies one's ability to have good and affordable food to eat, access to safe drinking water, good shelter, access to good and affordable medical facilities, being able to communicate, have access to good education, have access to use decent and sustained infrastructural facilities (Akpan, 2011).

Quantity of Stolen Oil and Number of Illegal Refineries

In another perspective, the caliber of persons behind the oil theft also form the reasons or why oil pipeline vandalism thrives. At the Nigeria oil and Gas Exhibition and Conference held on February 2013 in Abuja, the former Managing Director of Shell Petroleum Development Company, Mr. Mutiu Sunmonu described the oil theft sponsors as "principalities and powers in high places". He compared oil theft to drug business, and added

that there are big men and well-connected in private and public governments. He went on to say that, like the drug business all over the world, that “criminals who sabotage crude oil pipelines in the Niger Delta were only working for bigger “entities”, that the small criminals in the creeks of Niger Delta bursting pipelines and stealing crude oil are not working for themselves – they are sponsored by “principalities and powers in high places” just as the drug business in various parts of the world (Sunmonu, 2013). Again, these “principalities and powers” are undermining the country’s development – they steal the oil and launder the profit in foreign lands, while the foreign economies are doing well and growing ours dwindle and retrogress. These are the enemies of common people who lack the basics that sustain life. Meanwhile, the huge profits made by oil thieves are responsible for the illegal business to thrive despite several destructions of unconventional or illegal refineries within the Niger Delta. It is revealed that oil bunkers make over ₦20 million monthly. That is a huge sum of money and drives more appetite daily.

The quantity of oil stolen through this “underground economy” is not certain, but it is estimated to be large. For instance, the Nigeria National Petroleum Company reported 800 cases of pipeline vandalism from January to October 2000, culminating in the loss of about US\$4 billion at the end of the year (Gbadamosi; Kupolokun; Oluleye, 2008). The issue of pipeline vandalism is not a recent development, and Nigeria has lost so much in monetary value to this illegal activity. The former Minister of Finance under Goodluck Jonathan administration Dr. Ngozi Okonjo – Iweala put the figure of oil theft and illegal bunkering at 400,000 barrels per day. On the other hand the joint venture operators, estimates the loss of oil to the thieves to be between 150,000 and 180,000 barrels per day (Uche, 2013). However, relying on official government figures, it means that Nigeria and her operating partners may be losing a cumulative estimate of \$40m (about ₦6 billion) per day at a flat price of \$100 per barrel of crude oil. This translates to an estimated ₦2.184 tn per year.

On the other hand, there are very many unconventional refineries scattered along the creeks of the Niger Delta. Indeed, the Joint Task Force (JTF) in the Niger Delta reported that it had destroyed 3,778 illegal refineries and seized eight vessels, 120 barges, 878 Cotonou boats, 178 fuel pumps, 5238 surface tanks, 606 pumping machines and 626 outboard engines allegedly belonging to oil thieves in the first quarter of 2012. Perhaps by the end of that year and now more may have been put in place by these oil thieves (Uche, 2013).

Crude oil exploration and exploitation is mainly carried out in the South-South geo-political zone. Thus, illegal refineries are located on the creeks of the Niger Delta in places such as Aroton village in Warri South West Local Government Area of Delta State, Okuboto creek at Andoni, Bakassi in Cross River and so on. These places represent all the spots where the illegal activities take place.

Internal Market for Artisanal Refineries

Outlets for the sale of illegally refined product are known to the producers; such popular outlets include Aggrey Road in old Port Harcourt Township where roadside vendors sell in jerry cans. Sellers of the product are also seen openly vending it along Victoria, Niger, Bonny streets and Creek Road, all in Port Harcourt. Those who patronize the business are commercial motorcyclists, popularly called Okada whose operation was banned in Port Harcourt. But of recent the Keke Napped” refined okada” are patronizing it (Chigbo, 2009).

Apart from Port Harcourt, those patronizing these illegal products also come from neighbouring states of Imo, Abia, Akwa Ibom. It means some petrol stations in these states

obtained the cheap product, mix it with the imported products and sell to the unsuspecting motorists. But with legally refined crude either locally or imported one to make high profits. “It is seen as a major business for militants and their errant boys. The militants sell to middlemen who bring it to town. It is providing employment to a lot of unskilled labour”, a source from the government in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State Capital (Chigbo, 2009). But what sort of employment when measured with the adverse effects these activities have on the economy as a whole? The products of such illegal refining points are not of good quality. The end result is that many vehicles that use the products develop engine problems due to the mixture of such products with genuine ones.

Methods use by Illegal Oil Bunkers and Oil Thieves

Illegal oil bunkering and theft is a phenomenon that is associated with all segments of the society, not only from oil producing areas but some Nigerians from all sections of the country and international collaborators. The youths especially, some miscreants, layabouts, political thugs, politician’s community members, military personnels and other security operatives are involved.

There are three classes of youths who engage in illegal oil bunkering – jobless or unemployed – just to eke a living; the other youths are those who are being sponsored by influential Nigerians such as the military, police and other highly placed politicians for a fee; the other group of youths are the organized militants such as Tompolo, Boy Loaf who are greedy and needed oil money by all means (emphasis mine). They siphoned the oil by blowing the pipes using various devices or instruments. Or they opened deep holds on the oil bearing pipes and connect their pipes.

On the other hand, the unpatriotic Nigerian vandals and their backers have devised various methods of stealing the products. The methods range from local artisanal bunkering to highly organized and complex methods involving the use of ships to ferry crude oil. The syndicates behind the stealing of refined petroleum products from facilities owned by the oil multinationals, especially flow lines and wellheads in the Niger Delta have both local and foreign collaborators and are usually so highly connected that even security agents posted to secure the area are afraid of them. For illustration and example a security agent with the JTF put it thus:

Oil thieves often come fully armed and are backed by top military officers who would simply instruct the junior officers on the field to look the other way. He added that it is only in few instances where there is a problem of communication between the backers of the vandals and the men on the field or where the vandals choose to be greedy and turn rogue that they are arrested by security agents. And there are quite a number of such examples. In January 2013, two ships found with suspected stolen crude oil were intercepted in the creeks of the Niger Delta: eleven Nigerians, ten Indians and two Ghanaians, who were aboard the ship, were arrested.

In November, 2012, a ship called MT Akshay, operated by an Indian shipping company was impounded in the waters of the Delta with 158,000 litres of crude oil. The ship, with its cargo and those on board, comprising 10 Indians and 4 Nigerians, were handed over to Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) for further investigation and prosecution. In the same vein, in December 2012, MT Eve, another ship was intercepted with

75,000 litres of refined fuel and its occupants, nine Nigerians and two Ghanaians were handed over to the security for prosecution.... Apart from the ones who steal Nigerians crude oil with ships and taken abroad to refine, there are countless numbers of those who daily steal and refine their own crude locally. P. 23.

According to Codel, he further put that about 10 per cent of the stolen crude oil are being refined locally by gangs operating in the Delta's creeks and swamps, while the rest is mainly going to criminal networks in Ukraine, Serbia and Bulgaria, or to Singapore (Tell, July 8, P. 23).

Oil theft probably not only on the Niger Delta has been internationalized. This is so because according to Dele Cole, a former Ambassador and Special Adviser to former President Olusegun Obasanjo on International Relations, put forward that world leaders should "investigate the global trade in stolen crude oil, from the ships used to transport it to the money used to pay for it". He specifically appealed to the G 8 (Group of Eight countries—the United States, Japan, Germany, France, United Kingdom, Italy, Canada, and Russia to find a technological solution to combating oil theft). He added that:

Stolen Nigerian crude is transported on internationally registered vessels, sold to international buyers, processed by international oil refineries and paid for using international bank accounts. This underscores why the country needs international collaboration to battle the problem that has created a hole in the national treasury though the Nigerian government may have to play the lead role, it cannot successfully put an end to the illicit trade acting alone (Sawyer, 2013).

It was as a result of the negative impacts on the economy that the former President Goodluck Jonathan pleaded with the British Prime Minister, David Cameron in February 2013 to assist in efforts to stem the illicit trade. He added that the G 8 should take a firm stand on oil theft as has been taken on money laundering, as it affects the dealings with public officers (Sawyer, 2013).

Oil Theft – Community Involvement

Before the discovery of these illegal distilleries, the militants were enjoying their business through which they made a lot of money with no running cost until the Joint Task Force through informants from local communities burst their operation in May 2008. The first discovery was in Delta State. Later, the Joint Task Force closed down hundreds of illegal distilling points in Ogoniland. The JTF have made several arrests such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, the Nigeria Police for Prosecution (Chigbo, 2009).

Armed Cartels are behind illegal refineries in the creeks of the Niger Delta. The proceeds from the illegal refineries are aiding the importation of illegal arms and ammunition. The result of these activities result in insecurity in the region – kidnapping, armed robbery, assassinations, rape and other form of violence (Bello, 2008).

It is also of note that in some communities though contentious, traditional rulers have also been in the practice of protecting culprits. It means that such environment, economic sabotage is done with impunity. For instance, the communities where oil is stolen or where illegal refineries are located are ruled by people. If they are not part of the business, they

should report these thieves to law enforcement agents. This is never reported at any time since the war on these illegal business started except once. On the other hand this bastardly economic sabotage in these communities receive the backing of top government functionaries, politicians, military officers and highly placed individuals in the society.

According to Sawyeer:

recently, a serving police officer and 21 others were arrested by the Joint Task Force, (JTF), operation Pulo Shield, Sector 3 of the 13th Brigade, Nigeria Army, Cross River State, in connection with oil bunkering in the state. In this instance, two policemen were actually involved but escape arrest. The police are not the only security agency accused of involvement in oil bunkering or pipelines vandalism. At different times men of the Nigerian Army, Navy, the State Security Services, (SSS), and other security agencies posted to guard oil installations in the Niger Delta region have been accused of involvement in oil bunkering or pipeline vandalism. (Tell July 8, 2013 p. 23).

March 23, 2013, two security personnels lost their lives while on a surveillance patrol of oil pipelines in Isawo area of Ikorodu, Lagos State (Tell, July 8, 2013 p. 22). Those who lost their lives were members of Nigerian Security and Civil Organization. The colleagues of the deceased in the NSCDC insist that the vandals in question were policemen. But the police also insisted that their men were not responsible for the killing of the NSCDC men. It is a growing belief that even security agents who are supposed to protect the nation's commonwealth now actively connive with the oil thieves.

To further portray that security operatives are involved in oil theft and illegal bunkering, one self-acclaimed pipeline vandal, "Citizen Zion" stated that:

... it is no longer news that security agents assigned to patrol pipelines and keep vandals like himself away have practically taken over the business from them. Citing examples of what transpired around the petroleum pipelines situated in the Diamond Estate, Idimu-Isheri-Olofin Development area of Lagos.... They are now the ones doing the business. They load fuel into jerrycans, and sell them to ready buyers, around the community and as far as Cotonou. Because they are police people, no one can challenge them (Tell July 8, 2013 p. 23).

Impact of Oil Theft and Illegal Bunkering on the Economy

Nigerian economy is oil driven. The dislocation of it either through price reduction in international market, or sabotage through vandalisation or bunkering has negative impact on Nigeria. So far oil theft and illegal bunkering has a far-reaching impact on Nigeria economy. For example, the former Minister of Finance in Goodluck Jonathan's administration, Dr. Ngozi – Iweala put the figure of oil theft and illegal bunkering at 400,000 barrels per day, while one joint venture operators (Shell Petroleum) estimates the loss to be between 150,000 and 180,000 barrels per day. However, relying on official government figures, it means that Nigeria and her operating partners have been losing a cumulative estimate of \$40m (about ₦6 billion) per day at a flat price of \$100 per barrel of crude oil. This translates to an estimated ₦2.184 tn per annum (Igwe, 2013).

In another perspective, Mutiu Sunmonu, Chairmen, African region, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), posited that, "heavily armed and well-organized groups

attacked oil and gas facilities in the Delta, shut down operations of the company, kidnapped staff and sabotaged pipelines”. “Barges take stolen oil to tankers waiting offshore for exports. “There is a massive illegal refining business based on stolen crude oil. All these have reduced the amount of oil SPDC is producing, created environmental and social problems from oil spills and reduced government revenue that could be used to develop infrastructure and services. That between 2006 – 2011 alone 16,476,011 barrels of crude oil have been lost. The staggering loss translated may involve as much as \$15 billion (about 2.4 trillion) in revenue per year (Igwe, 2013).

Effect of Oil Theft and Illegal Bunkering on Human Security

Productive human beings are the main drivers of an economy. Thus human lives are important in all segments of an economy. In the process of monitoring or supervising the oil activities vis-à-vis the activities of oil vandals and bunkering, human lives are usually lost. In this connection and for illustration in the last three years (2013-2015) a total of about 350 persons including some NNPC workers, police officers, and community members had been killed as a result of the activities of oil thieves. In other words, these people were killed by these unpatriotic elements – oil thieves and pipeline vandals (Punch, Wednesday, September 2, 2015, p. 30).

In 2012, it was reported that, three officials of NNPC were shot death while on duty trying to fix the punctured pipelines by vandals. The oil pipeline vandals or hoodlums opened fire on them. Again on March, 2013, two security personnel lost their lives while on a surveillance patrol of oil pipelines in Isawo area of Ikorodu, Lagos (Tell, July 8, 2013 p. 22). A point to note is that those security operatives who were killed, were members of Nigerian Security and Civil Organization. It was reported that they were killed by Nigerian policemen. Though the police insisted that their men were not responsible for the killing of the NSCDC men. This point perhaps portrays the involvement of some security operatives on oil theft and bunkering. It means and supports the growing belief that even security agents who are supposed to protect the nations commonwealth now actively connive with the oil thieves (emphasize mine). Shell Petroleum Company of Nigeria claimed that between 2010 and 2011, there were 237 reported incidents of crude oil theft from SDPC facilities that involved vandalism, spills or fire.

Challenges

The greatest challenge facing the oil companies and indeed the Nigerian state is how to transport both crude oil and refined petroleum products to refineries and depots without being stolen or vandalized. Cole noted that “pipeline vandalism is extremely pervasive now because crude oil theft had degenerated from the occasional and haphazard operations of some local thieves to a well-coordinated syndicate of criminals, who are prepared to do anything to obtain the much desired crude for their own personal gain”. Oil thieves are encouraged because of the inability of the Nigerian government to build and run domestic refineries. The consequence, according to International Maritime Bureau report titled: *Story Behind the Story* is that “many vessels are attacked while at anchor, drifting, or conducting ship-to-ship transfers of refined cargo”. These have culminated in losses for the local economy.

Efforts of Government in Tackling Oil Theft and Bunkering

The federal government of Nigeria is not folding its arms on the decay arising from oil theft and bunkering in Nigeria. Government has involved some of the security personnel

to guard the oil installation – pipelines. Besides, government is seeking international cooperation in tackling it.

Conclusion

So far, the paper has x-rayed the impact of illegal Oil Business and Nigeria economy. The paper looked at the issue of security as the epicentre for the smooth managing of the national economy. The paper also discovers that the neglect of agriculture has a negative impact on petroleum economy as almost everybody depends on it. The country is a mono-cultural economy, hence cannot create employment to those willing to work. It is the unemployed especially the youths that are responsible for the vandalisation of oil pipes and bunkering. The level of poverty is very high, thus the youths are impatient and are used by wealthy Nigerians to do the “dirty” job and by extension take to crime. It is also discovered that, both the stolen oil and those spilled through pollution run into billions of naira every year, and this is a lost to the Nigerian state and by extension retards development.

Besides, there are so many illegal refineries scattered in many creeks of the Niger Delta, from Cross River through Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta among others. These illegal refineries are agents of pollution especially in the mangrove, and in so doing the pollutants destroy the aquatic life especially the fish. In turn affects the livelihood of the people who depend on fish. Again, the Joint Task Force is helping to check the excesses of these oil thieves and oil pipe vandals. It is discovered that to police the oil pipelines, the communities where these pipelines pass through should be involved in it – for they know themselves and it is expected the incessant blowing of these pipes would be reduced. The efforts of government in checking the oil bunkering and incessant oil pipe vandalism are weak. It is expected that the government need to be proactive by equipping the Joint Task Force with modern communication gadgets and other necessary equipment to mount surveillance in areas prone to theft, bunkering and oil pipe vandalism.

Recommendations

Petroleum drives the Nigerian economy and so everything necessary is needed to save-guard its operation. In this connection, the federal and state governments need to diversify Nigerian economy so as to provide employment to the teeming youths. Employment may reduce the rate of oil pipeline vandalism and the youths may avoid being agents to big time oil thieves. Youths in communities where oil pipelines pass through need to be involved in policing the areas and stipend paid to them accordingly. The Joint Task Force overseeing the protection of the oil pipes, bunkering need to be highly motivated – this is necessary so, that they do not fall prey by becoming part of the oil theft business. Motivation may be through promotion and other incentives. Foreigners involved in the illegal oil business should be treated as international crimes and international law applied on them. For Nigerians, Nigeria law in the area of economic sabotage be applied. Human security is paramount in sustenance of Nigeria economy. Illegal oil business is a big business and those involved know it, they would need everything done to succeed – that may involve killing those who would want to be on their way. It is pertinent that those guarding or policing the areas prone to these activities are protected by the Nigerian government. In the course of discharging their functions lives are sometimes lost the federal government should pay compensation to these families.

Oil bunkering and oil pipeline vandalism may be difficult to abolish in the Niger Delta except the people behind it are fished out. The boys who carry out these acts are sponsored by well placed Nigerians. The questions are, where do these boys get the money to

buy expensive arms, instruments, boats and other accessories for the operation. Besides, oil bunkering is the function of greed. Greed destroy the norms and values of the nation. These greedy people should be worked on psychologically to refrain from materialism.

References

- Akpan, D. A. (2011). Youths and Contemporary Socio-Economic Challenges: Implications for Nigerian Development in the 21st Century: A Discussant Paper, Department of History and International Studies, Veritas University (the Catholic University of Nigeria) Abuja. August 23.
- Akpan, D. A. and Akpan, E. O. (2012). Globalization and Nigerian Economy Beyond Overschooling in *Journal of Education*, September 5(1).
- Bello, S. Y. (2009). Armed Cartels Behind Illegal Refineries. Interviewed by Newswatch Correspondent on January 19, at Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- Chigbo, M. (2009). The Cartels Behind Nigeria's Illegal Refineries in Tell Magazine, January 19. P. 17.
- Gbadamosi, R.; Kupolokun, F.; Oluleye, O. (2008). A Story of the Deregulation of the Nigerian Downstream Oil Sector, Abuja: Petroleum Product Pricing Regulatory Agency (PPPRA).
- Mayhew, S. (1992). Oxford Dictionary of Geography. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sawyerr, S. (2013). At the Mercy of Oil Thieves in Tell Magazine Lagos. No. 27, July 8, p. 19 – 20.
- Sunmonu, M. (2013). Powerful Nigerians Behind Oil Theft-Shell Punch. Thursday, February 21, 2013. P. 30.
- Todaro, M. P. and Smith, S. C. (2009). Economic Development Tenth Ed. New York, Addison – Wesley.
- Uche, I. (2013). Oil Theft, What Nigeria Must do. Punch Wednesday, July 10, p. 26.
- Yusuf, I. A. (2011). Nigeria's Still Poor at 51, Newswatch, Monday, October 10, p. 8.