

**AN ARTICLE ON PIPELINE VANDALISM AND OIL THEFT IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION OF NIGERIA,  
CAUSES, EFFECTS, SOLUTIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.**

**Volume 1**

**By Victor Obarafor, 2019**

**Information Technology Specialist, and Chief Coordinating Officer - IBIZ Enterprise Nigeria.**



**Abstract**

Oil theft and pipeline vandalism are some of the major challenges that plague and undercut the advancement of oil and gas industries in Nigeria, hence crippling her growth globally. Frequent attacks by the Niger Delta militants on oil pipelines is worrisome due to its devastating environmental effects.

**Introduction**

Over the years, pipeline vandalism and oil theft in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria has been a challenge to address in the country. It has destroyed arable lands in the affected areas which includes; Imo river, Adibawa flow station, and Okordia-rumuekpe, leading to high cost of agricultural products as these products have to be transported from regions that are not affected by the menace of pipeline vandalism. Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings have been grossly affected by crude oil theft and pipeline

vandalism leading to poor revenue generation and concurrent budget deficits. According to Mutiu Sumonu, the Managing Director of Shell Petroleum Development Company, Nigeria Plc, about 5 billion US dollars is lost yearly to oil theft. In addition to the above, surveillance systems have been implemented by the government to solve this menace, but these systems have not been effective in fighting this menace.

### **The Niger Delta Region of Nigeria.**

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is located in the south-south zone of the country. It is the region that produces oil and the lifeline of the Nigerian economy. It comprises of nine states which includes; Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers. About 31 million people live in the region which is renowned as one of the World's ten most important wetland and coastal marine ecosystems.

### **Some causes of pipeline vandalism and oil theft in Nigeria Delta Region.**

- High rate of unemployment.  
Unemployment particularly in the youth sector appears to be the major factor that compels some people involve themselves in criminal activities, including oil pipeline vandalism and oil theft as a means for economic survival.
- The need to acquire wealth illegally without working hard.  
Some young individuals in Nigeria, especially in the Niger Delta Region use this platform to acquire money easily through theft and sale of oil and gas. Additionally, the Niger Delta militants empower these individuals with facilities to vandalize pipelines and obtain oil and gas illegally.
- Bad governance and corruption.  
Illegal mining of oil and gas in the Niger Delta region by some selfish government officials for personal benefit, and commercial purposes.

### **Effects of pipeline vandalism in the Niger Delta of Nigeria**

- Oil theft and pipeline vandalism contributes to financial loss of about 5 billion US dollars yearly in Nigeria.
- The people of the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria have been denied arable lands for agriculture, fishing, and farming due to pipeline vandalism.
- Contributes to environmental pollution in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria.
- Contributes to the current economic recession in Nigeria.
- Pipeline vandalism, oil theft, and oil bunkering has resulted to the withdrawal of some foreign investment in the Niger Delta region

## **Niger Delta Militants**

These are group of individuals in the Niger Delta Region that vandalize pipelines and obtain oil illegally in this region. The militants group are actively involved in oil theft as they perceive that the Niger Delta Region doesn't get a greater share of oil revenue it produces. These individuals were also behind a 2016 wave of violence, including attacks on pipelines and other facilities, that helped push Nigeria into recession.

## **Solutions for pipeline vandalism and oil theft in Nigeria.**

Over the recent years, surveillance systems have been implemented by the government and other stakeholder like shell petroleum, to keep track of criminal activities in the oil and gas facility. However surveillance systems are not enough to curb the menace of criminal activities in the Niger Delta Region.

Overall, I recommend the installation of modern sensing Artificial Intelligent devices to continuously monitor the integrity of oil and gas pipelines against leak and threats of vandalism in the upstream and downstream sectors. This would further seek to support the already existing surveillance systems in protecting oil and gas facilities, and improve the efficiency of oil production and distribution in the country. The benefits expected of this system includes; situational awareness, monitoring, tracking, perimeter surveillance, offshore platform protection through collision prevention, border and coastal surveillance, critical infrastructure perimeter security, and information intercept.

## **Conclusion**

The government should set up hubs for empowering youths in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria through entrepreneurial education. People living across all the states in this region should be sensitized about fighting this menace. Oil producing industries within this region should equally provide opportunities for people in the lower economic class. The government of Nigeria should also strengthen its cooperation with the United Kingdom Department for International Development in its partnership to enforce security of oil and gas facilities.

## **References**

(Shell Nigeria, 2018) Security, oil theft, sabotage, and spills.

[https://www.shell.com.ng/media/nigeria-reports-and-publications-briefing-notes/security-theft-and-sabotage/\\_jcr\\_content/par/toptasks\\_426262614.stream/1554121799010/f607e15fb5a85f30c73aaede68c66dcee23d42cb/security-theft-sabotage-spills-2019.pdf](https://www.shell.com.ng/media/nigeria-reports-and-publications-briefing-notes/security-theft-and-sabotage/_jcr_content/par/toptasks_426262614.stream/1554121799010/f607e15fb5a85f30c73aaede68c66dcee23d42cb/security-theft-sabotage-spills-2019.pdf)

(ANGELA AJODO-ADEBANJOKO, 12 SEP 2017) Towards ending conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta region. <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/towards-ending-conflict-and-insecurity-niger-delta-region>

(Dr. Alphonsus O. Njoku, 2016) OIL PIPELINES VANDALISM AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIAN SOCIETY <http://www.multidisciplinaryjournals.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/OIL-PIPELINES-VANDALISM-AND-ITS-EFFECTS.pdf>

(Paul Carsten and Alexis Akwagyiram) Nigeria 'Delta Avengers' militants vow to cripple economy if Buhari re-elected <https://www.google.com/amp/s/mobile.reuters.com/article/amp/idUSKCN1Q31GH>