

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS OF SHELL'S ACTIVITIES IN NIGERIA: REVISITING THE CASE OF THE OGONI COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

The history of oil exploration and production in Ogoniland is a long, complex and often painful one that has become seemingly intractable in terms of its resolution and future direction. Ogoniland has a tragic history of pollution from oil spills to deliberate contamination of the environment through 24- hour gas flares by the oil companies. If the revelation by the report of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) released in August 2011 entitled: "Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland" is anything to go by, then the Transnational Oil Corporations and the Federal Government of Nigeria should have a re-think about the whole commercial venture of oil exploration and exploitation in order to save the succeeding generations of Niger Deltans, particularly the Ogonis from going into extinction. It was stated in its summary recommendation among other issues that the environmental restoration of Ogoniland is possible but may take between 25 to 30 years with initial cost implications of US\$1.bn to be contributed by the oil industry and the Government of Nigeria. This article examines the human rights implications of unchecked oil exploration activities by Shell Petroleum Development Company in Ogoniland, taking into consideration the historical, economic, socio-political and legal factors that have contributed to this sordid state of affairs.