

PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OGONI OIL MUST REMAIN IN THE GROUND: MEDI CONDEMN PLANNED RESUMPTION OF OIL OPERATION IN YORLA OIL FIELD AND DEMANDS FULL DECOMMISSIONING, NOT RE-ENTRY.

The Miideekor Environmental Development Initiative - MEDI issues this urgent statement to the Federal Government of Nigeria, The Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), the international community, and all people of conscience worldwide:

Ogoni oil must remain in the ground. No oil well should be reopened in Ogoniland. We demand the immediate decommissioning of all dilapidated wells and facilities, a comprehensive cleanup of our already devastated environment, and a permanent end to the environmental genocide being perpetrated against the Ogoni and the Niger Delta people.

The Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), in a recent release on **July 21, 2026**, awarded the Yorla South Oil Field, Petroleum Prospecting Licence 2A32 within Oil Mining Lease (OML) 11 to **Dutchford Exploration and Production Company Limited**, a Lagos-based firm co-founded by **Olatimbo Ayinde**, a British-Nigerian oil businesswoman currently on trial in the United Kingdom for cross-border criminal conspiracy.

This award is not a development. It is a declaration of war against a people who have already paid the ultimate price for the black gold beneath their feet.

THE YORLA OIL FIELD DISASTER: A WARNING, NOT AN INVITATION

Since **August 3, 2025**, the Yorla-14 well, drilled in 1967 and abandoned for over three decades has been hemorrhaging crude oil into the land, water, and air of Kpean community. The Joint Investigation Visit (JIV) report conducted by the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) on August 8, 2025, confirmed that the spill was caused by **equipment failure due to long-term corrosion** not sabotage, as falsely claimed by NNPC.

Despite this official finding, the spill was left unattended. On **August 15, 2025**, the neglected leak erupted into a fire that further scarred the environment.

By December 4, 2025, oil was spreading again. A high-powered Federal Government delegation led by National Security Adviser Nuhu Ribadu visited on December 22, 2025, walked on sand laid out overnight like a red carpet, and declared Ogoni "ripe" for oil resumption.

As of late January 2026, **nearly six months after the initial spill**, no cleanup had commenced. Mangroves, palm trees, fruit trees, and farmlands lay blackened and lifeless. Community members reported strange illnesses and deaths.

If facilities shut down since 1993 are still causing this level of destruction, **reopening the wells without decommissioning obsolete infrastructure would be reckless**; as warned by Dr. Nnimmo Bassey, Executive Director of the Health of Mother Earth Foundation.

NO NEW ORORO-1. NO OKRIKA FLAMES. NO BILE GAS POLLUTION.

The Ogoni people know what happens when abandoned oil infrastructure is neglected. We have seen it at **Ororo-1** in Ondo State, where a blowout in May 2020 ignited an inferno that has burned unabated for years, turning a once-thriving fishing and cocoa community into a wasteland of toxic fumes and despair.

We will not allow Ogoniland to become the next Ororo-1.

We have witnessed **Okrika flames**; decades of gas flaring that have turned night into day across the Niger Delta, releasing sulfur dioxide, benzene, and carcinogenic toxins into the air, acidifying our soils, destroying our crops, and sentencing our children to respiratory diseases, skin ailments, and cancers.

We will not accept new gas flares in Ogoni.

We reject **bile gas pollution**, the suffocating, poisonous emissions that have become synonymous with oil extraction in our region. The Ogoni people are not guinea pigs for the petroleum industry's experiments. We are human beings with the inalienable right to life, health, and a clean environment.

THE UNEP REPORT: A ROADMAP IGNORED

The **2011 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland** documented catastrophic contamination: drinking water wells with petroleum hydrocarbons up to **14,000 times** the Nigerian standard; benzene concentrations **900 times** above WHO guidelines; and extensive destruction of mangrove ecosystems that may take **30 years** to recover if pollution stops today.

More than a decade has passed since the UNEP report, yet the remediation of Ogoniland is still in its early stages. The Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) has commenced on-the-ground remediation. The Federal Government of Nigeria has not funded the process since the creation of HYPREP, and now, with our environment still wounded and our cleanup still unfinished, that same government believes the answer is to restart petroleum extraction?

This is not governance. This is **environmental genocide**.

THE OGONI STRUGGLE: BLOOD ALREADY PAID

The Ogoni people did not arrive at this position lightly. Between 1976 and 1991, over **two million barrels of oil** were spilled in **2,976 separate spills** in Ogoniland.

Our resistance led to the suspension of oil production in 1993. But the price was exorbitant: the **execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others** on November 10, 1995, by the Sani Abacha military regime; a judicial murder that drew global condemnation and remains a scar on Nigeria's conscience.

Ken Saro-Wiwa described the destruction of Ogoni as **"ecological warfare"** and **"omnicidal in effect."**

His words were prophetic. Today, the Ogoni people still cannot drink from their rivers, farm their lands, or breathe clean air. And now the government wants to resume the very activity that caused this catastrophe?

OUR DEMANDS

The Miideekor Environmental Development Initiative, speaking on behalf of the Ogoni people and all Niger Delta communities threatened by extractive violence, demands the following:

1. **Immediate cancellation** of all plans to resume oil production in Ogoniland, including the Yorla oil Field re-entry project.
2. **Immediate decommissioning** of all abandoned, corroded, and unsafe oil wells and facilities in Ogoniland, in strict compliance with Sections 232 and 233 of the Petroleum Industry Act and the Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Decommissioning and Abandonment Regulations 2023.
3. **Immediate cleanup** of the Yorla-14 spill site in Kpean, with full compensation for affected farmers, fishers, and community members who have lost livelihoods, health, and loved ones.
4. **Full implementation** of the UNEP Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland and the BAYELSA REPORT; An Environmental genocide: Counting the Human and Environmental Cost of Oil in Bayelsa, Nigeria recommendations.
5. **A permanent moratorium** on new oil exploration, drilling, and gas flaring in Ogoniland and the entire Niger Delta.
6. **An immediate, inclusive, multi-stakeholder dialogue held in Ogoniland**, not Abuja with civil society, youth, women, traditional rulers, and environmental justice organizations to determine the future of our land.

A CALL TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

We call upon the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union, the United States Congress, the UK Parliament, international environmental organizations, and all peoples of conscience to:

- **Condemn** the planned resumption of oil extraction in Ogoniland as a violation of the Ogoni people's right to a clean environment, guaranteed under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and Nigeria's constitution.
- **Investigate** the ongoing Yorla oil Field spill as a potential crime against humanity and environmental genocide.
- **Sanction** any international oil company, financier, or insurer involved in the planned Ogoni re-entry.
- **Support** the Ogoni people's right to say **NO** to extraction and **YES** to a just transition to renewable energy and sustainable livelihoods.

The world watched in silence in 1995 when Ken Saro-Wiwa was hanged for defending his people. The world cannot watch in silence again as the Nigerian government attempts to finish what Shell started; the complete annihilation of Ogoniland.

CONCLUSION

The Miideekor Environmental Development Initiative declares unequivocally: **There will be no new environmental genocide in Ogoni. No new Ororo-1. No Okrika flames. No bile gas pollution.**

Ogoni oil has already cost us our environment, our health, our livelihoods, and the lives of our finest sons and daughters. We will not sacrifice what little remains on the altar of petroleum profits.

The oil must stay in the ground. The wells must be decommissioned. The land must be healed. And justice must be done.

In Solidarity

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