



International Dimension Of Oil Theft In The Niger Delta, 2009-2019

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ABSTRACT

This research work examined the implications of the international dimension of oil theft and its correlation or linkage with the persistent social conflicts in the Niger Delta communities. Relying on qualitative research design and adopting dependency and frustration-aggression theories, the study addressed its four-pronged objectives which sought to interrogate and examine the nature of oil theft; the international dimension of oil theft; the nexus between oil theft and conflict, and the inherent environmental and socio-economic consequences of oil theft in the Niger Delta in particular, and Nigeria as a whole. With four corresponding research questions, the study obtained data from secondary sources through critical review of published documents and related academic materials. Data collected from secondary materials were presented on tables and plates and analysed in line with research objectives. Findings and recommendations were made to include that oil theft activities which represent its international dimension proceed on an industrial-level scale and implicates on huge financial loss as well as socio-economic and environmental hazards to the immediate Niger Delta communities in particular, and the Nigerian economy as a whole. Following from this, the study recommended that the Nigerian government should synergise efforts with oil multinationals and Niger Delta communities and their leaders to tackle oil theft and sundry criminalities in the Niger Delta as this will help to reduce social conflicts in oil bearing communities.

Keywords: Oil theft, Niger Delta, International Dimension.

INTRODUCTION

Doubtless to say that oil is a lucrative industry. Huge revenues flow from its activities. However, when an industry gets too lucrative such as the oil industry, it presents its own problems. Everybody eventually wants to get a share of the bounty. Those who cannot get their share through legitimate means are tempted to adopt illegal methods of appropriating the commodity. This appears to give a sordid background to the problem of oil theft in the Niger Delta.

Oil and natural gas assume great importance in the international arena. The demand and supply of oil and natural gas have been critical factors in world politics. Industrialisation which is critical to economic development of nations depends very much on energy as a factor of production. Firewood and coal are far less effective and efficient to propel productivity at an industrial scale. They are hardly enough to sustain and support increased international or global demands (Kegley & Blanton, 2011, p.571). Though coal has its pluses and advantages over firewood, oil and natural gas largely rank best to governments in terms of efficiency in generating energy (Kegley & Blanton, 2011).

It is said that fossil fuels (mostly oil) account for nearly 95 percent of global energy demand and consumption (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2012, p.404). The value of crude oil production alone is estimated to equal a financial worth of \$1.7 trillion yearly. When the downstream fuels and other services are added to that, it obviously shows that oil is indeed, a highly lucrative commodity. Companies and governments take advantage of the huge wealth that is generated from crude oil. World's biggest firms work in the oil patch than any other known industry, just as government regimes are maintained and kept running with oil revenues (Desjardins, 2017).

Oil has remained a major source of global energy. Even though there are alternative means of generating energy through dams and nuclear power plants, much of the energy comes from burning fossil fuels in power or electric generating plants. Indeed, oil is vital and critical to the survival of nations. It plays a key role in international relations. The need for it encourages different levels of interaction among states in several important ways that promote global interdependence. It creates market and enhances financial exchange and prosperity, though not without curses (Auty, 1994; Karl, 1997; Ross, 2012 & Soremi, 2019). On the basis of this, some scholars describe oil as both essential and strategic. Others consider it as the blood life of modern global economy (Obi, 2011, p.89; Hiro, 2007; Robert, 2004, p.5 & Smil 2008, p.160). In noting its importance, Smil (2008) posits that there would hardly be plastic, transport and globalisation without the existence of oil.

Due to its importance to the survival of the global economy, oil is regarded as one of the dominant pillars of world politics. Despite efforts to secure energy through alternative sources, oil remains critical to economic and industrial survival of nations. In fact, oil is said to be the world's most vital and important mineral (Yergin, 2008, p.68). Feyide (1986) defines its importance in two fascinating ways: one as a raw material and second, as a convenient and effective source of energy. Crude oil as a raw or primary material provides the necessary impetus for the accelerated growth of world's petrochemical industries; and as energy, oil facilitates man's ability, capacity and effectiveness in getting work done (Feyide, 1986, p.86-150).

People in all parts of the universe are affected in different ways by the existence of crude oil. Nations are concerned about oil and the activities that surround its harvest for human consumption. It is so that no nation can do entirely without oil and its composite derivatives. Indeed, the presence of oil in some countries has necessitated further international interactions among oil producing countries and their non-oil producing counterparts. Such international organisations as Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) exist because oil exists. Nigeria holds its membership only because she produces oil (Amanyie, 2011, p.7).

As noted by (Okere, 2013), oil is the soul of the factories of the developed and highly industrialised countries just as it creates enormous wealth for supplier countries. Huge revenues from oil exportation help most producing states to draw up vigorous industrial and economic plans. The same way, its availability in cheap or low prices helped in rebuilding and the recovery of Western Europe and Japan after the Second World War (Kegley & Blanton, 2011, p.573).

Since the twentieth century, the demand and need to consume oil as a primary source of fossil fuel (energy) has been on the increase. This defies speculations that oil will soon lose its appeal because of serious researches on how to produce alternative energy. Regardless of such strong speculations, it has been predicted that the world will be in demand of 50 percent more oil in 2030 (Kegley & Blanton, 2011). Yergin (2009, p.8) cited in Kegley & Blanton (2011, p.573) asserts that:

While the global north remains a major consumer of oil, this century witnesses a globalisation of demand, with nearly 85 percent of the rise in oil demand happening in emerging markets and economies like China, the Middle East and India.

To corroborate Kegley & Blanton's view, the National Petroleum Council which is an advisory committee to the United States Secretary of Energy made a forecast that the demand for oil will take an onward leap. The committee projected an increase in demand of oil from 86 million to the region of 138 million barrels per day in 2030 (<https://www.britannica.com/science>).

This points to the fact that the aspiration of advanced nations to manufacture commodities that will take the place of oil and gas might not come too fast. While advanced countries are working hard to produce auto-mobile engines that will not depend on fossil fuels, the global thirst or hunger for petroleum drives multinational oil firms to search and drill oil in third world countries like Nigeria. Ironically though, there is stark disparity between the rate at which oil is being discovered around the world and the competing global demand for it. This further points to why oil supplies take a frontline position in world politics. For developing countries, especially African nations, primary commodities such as oil remain the major sustainer of their economies. The government of Nigeria for instance, depends so much on oil revenues to fund its annual budgets (Garuba, 2014). Consequently, oil plays crucial role in her domestic as well as foreign interactions. Is it any wonder that Nigeria attaches serious importance to the business of oil exploration!

As a lucrative commodity, oil attracts hard currencies and plays significant role in stabilising the nation's foreign exchange. Its availability in third world countries like Nigeria engenders a tripartite relationship. The tripartite relationship relates to an international intercourse among the government of a host country, multinational corporations (MNCs) and immediate host communities. Most often, the vested interest of these key players does not always ramify into mutual compatibility. Key actors in oil exploration appear to have divergent as well as vested interests, motives and expectations. Industrialised countries need oil to feed their industries and keep producing tertiary goods. Governments of host countries are eager to draw from the huge revenues that the sale of oil provides, and host communities expect at least, certain minimal economic and social rights and benefits from both the government and the multinational companies operating on their lands. Reconciling these interests to create harmonious atmosphere for operation has remained a major contradiction in oil politics in Nigeria. Hence (Allen, 2014) notes that failure by concerned authorities to implement oil-related policies would normally plunge actors into conflict and abnormal practices to which oil theft is the major issue that confronts the Nigerian state, and as such introduces a fundamental research problem.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine various dimensions of resource theft and persistent conflict in the Niger Delta. In line with the above, the study is guided by the following specific objectives:

1. Examine the nature of oil-theft in the Niger Delta.
2. Analyse the impact of international dimension on sustained oil theft in the Niger Delta.

Research Questions

This research work is guided by the following questions:

1. What is the nature of oil-theft in the Niger Delta?
2. How does international dimension contribute to sustained oil theft in the Niger Delta?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: With regard to the nature of this research and its objectives, this study adopted a historical and descriptive research design. The descriptive research design method concerns itself with the description of observation made concerning the subject matter of the study.

Nature/Sources of Data (Second materials): Based on research guidelines provided by Amara and Amaechi (2010), Asika (2006); Comery and Lee (1992); Dagi (1991); Ikeagwu (1998); Lockhart (1981); Manhein and Rich (1991) Amadi (2014); Ohaja (2003); Okoro (2001); Robinson (1954); Yergin (1997); Okwandu (2004); Amadi-Okechukwu (2014) & Ndu (2016), the study relied solely on secondary sources to generate data with which to execute its investigation. Data for the thesis were exclusively sourced from secondary materials through content analysis. Majorly, this study relied on the use of information or data from secondary sources. Since the study is descriptive and historical in nature, the researcher described and narrated facts or salient themes in the research work using data generated from secondary sources. Naturally, secondary data are collected from second-hand materials in order to harvest already existing knowledge on related areas of investigation. As it were, secondary data are second hand information about a given concept contained in already existing or published materials. On the basis of that, this study reviewed and analysed relevant information or data from relevant secondary sources relating to the

research questions and objectives. With regard to the stated objectives of this study and, in pursuance of answers to its study questions, this study analysed information from data archives from reputable institutions such as CHATHAM HOUSE, published and unpublished materials from journals, books, magazines, newspapers, articles, internet, published and unpublished theses and dissertations submitted to schools, government official sites, letters, gazettes, reports from oil companies and security agencies. Materials sourced from Nigerian Natural Resource Charter (NNRC) and policy briefs from organisations such as National Coalition on Gas Flaring and Oil Spills in the Niger Delta (NACGOND) are equally analyzed. The study also relied on documentary materials and statistical data and figures from National Bureau of Statistics (NB S) in writing up our report.

Methods of Data Collection: We relied on secondary sources to collect data for this research. The study adopted the following steps to collect or gather data for the research. This study relied solely on secondary sources of data as enumerated earlier. We placed emphasis on qualitative method of documentary sources. For that, we relied on official documents and reports from government and non-governmental organisations to adapt tabulated data or create tables with relevant information teased out from secondary materials.

Method of Data Analysis: Data analysis was carried out once the ground work for the study was done. In light of the above, information or data gathered from secondary sources were analysed in the context of the research objectives, questions and assumptions. In doing so, we established a link between the major variables which form the basic set of objectives of this work. Basically data/information gathered from literature search were presented in tables. Plates were also used to complement data presented in tables.

RESULTS

Table 1 Cases of Oil Theft via Pipeline Vandalism

Year Area	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Port Harcourt Line (Sys. 2E, 2EX)	382	142	336	393	616	269	917	1596	691	948	536	6826
Warri Line (Sys. 2A, 2C, 2CX).	280	161	548	495	315	378	236	205	24	12	96	2750
Mosimi (Sys. 2B)	605	184	463	479	1078	1071	1114	398	61	784	637	6874
Kaduna (Sys. 2D)	100	240	571	622	634	657	445	311	129	107	50	3866
Gombe (Sys. 2D)	86	109	850	241	862	1325	71	24	59	43	68	3738
Total	1453	836	2768	2230	3505	3700	2783	2534	964	1894	1387	24,054

Source: NNPC Annual Statistical Bulletin 2015 and 2019

Table 1 above shows the frequency of vandalism on oil and gas pipelines in the Niger Delta region. It is noted that two major oil pipelines transverse the entire Niger Delta region and others which are the Port Harcourt (Sys. 2E, 2EX) and the Warri (Sys. 2A, 2C, 2CX). It is observed that within the study period of 11 years a total of 24,054 cases of oil pipeline vandalism occurred with the Port Harcourt (Sys. 2E, 2EX) accounting for 6826 cases while the Warri (Sys. 2A, 2C, 2CX) accounted for 2750 cases. Pipeline vandalism is attributed to third party interference which defines oil theft activities.

Table 2 Volume of Crude Oil Losses (M³) Between 2009-2019

Year Area	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Port Harcourt Line (Sys. 2E, 2EX)	-	-	-	5.39	2.23	7.46	11.57	4.68	8,244.00	5,021.00	260,04.00	39300.33
Warri Line (Sys. 2A, 2C, 2CX).	-	45.93	14.37	-	16.86	14.29	-	-	-	122,154.00	248,062.00	387732.45
Mosimi (Sys. 2B)	110.38	144.50	127.39	163.22	268.76	332.85	471.24	80.15	4,422.00	80,526.00	34,756.00	121402.49
Kaduna (Sys. 2D)	-	3.99	16.06	13.06	39.62	1.08	-	3.90	6,337.00	1,705.00	-	8119.71
Gombe (Sys. 2D)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	110.38	194.42	157.81	181.57	327.48	355.69	482.81	80.93	36,428.00	205,996.00	308,822.00	553137.09

Source: NNPC Annual Statistical Bulletin 2015, 2016 & 2019

Table 2 further addresses Research objective one, which sought to examine the nature of oil theft in the Niger Delta. The table shows a loss of massive volume of oil to oil theft within the period under investigation.

Table 3: Crude Oil Lifting by Destination

Western Europe	Oceania/Pacific	South America	North America	Asia and Far East	Africa
France Germany Italy Netherlands Portugal Spain Sweden United Kingdom Ireland Turkey Norway Denmark Romania Poland Belgium Mediterranean	Australia New Zealand Solomon Island Isle of man	Argentina Brazil Peru Venezuela Uruguay Chile Colombia Dominican Republic	Canada Panama USA Atl Coast	China Japan Malaysia OMSP(s) Asia India Singapore Philippines Indonesia Thailand Taiwan UAE	Ghana Cote O' Ivoire Senegal South Africa Cotonou Togo Cameroon Gulf of Guinea Tunisia Lome Offshore Escravos Cape Verde

Source: NNPC ASB 2018 International Route/movement of Stolen Oil

Table 3 addresses research objective two which sought to analyse the international dimension of oil theft in the Niger Delta. The table shows places of destination of oil stolen from the Niger Delta to include different continents of the world. The involvement of foreign countries in the illegal movement of stolen crude oil shows that there is the international dimension to oil theft activities in the Niger Delta area.

Table 4: Sample Incidence of OIL theft in the Niger Delta involving foreigners

Date of Arrest	Vessels	Nationality of culprits	Place arrested	Reasons for arrest
August 25, 2014	Mercy	Seven crew members	The Furopa waterways in Southern Ijaw LGA of Bayelsa	Vessel loaded with stolen crude product worth ₦28.8 million
August 7, 2014	MV Elmina	One Ghanaian, one Cameroonian and 18 Nigerians	Sangana River in Brass LGA of Bayelsa	For the theft over 500,000 litres of crude oil.
April 19, 2014	MT Rheinfeden	One crew member	Akassa community in Brass LGA of Bayelsa	For loading with over 849612 tonnes of stolen crude product
April 18, 2014	MV Flora	8 crew members	Lagosgbene Obi creek in Southern Ijaw LGA of Bayelsa	For loading over 1,000 litres of stolen crude
March 28, 2014	MT crete	Two Britons	Chanomi creek, near Warri in Delta state	Involved in illegal bunkering and offering of 66,500 dollars bribe to facilitate oil theft
March 26, 2014	MV Gare	3 crew members	The coast of Angola	For hijacking and stealing crude products from a larger vessel MV Karela

March 20, 2014	MT Cergen whose original name was Marisa	6 Nigerians	Around Fish Town river in Southern Ijaw LGA of Bayelsa	For the theft of over 2,332,000 liters of crude oil
February 18, 2014	Locally made Tugboat	8 crew members	Ajide on Benin River in Edo state	For the theft of over 30 drums of crude produce
February 10, 2014	MT Divine Favour	11 crew members	Fairway Buoy, Bonny Island Rivers State	For the theft of over 500 metric tonnes of crude products
January 14, 2014	MT Eli Tank	21 Nigerians	Along Agbami oil field waterways in Southern Ijaw LGA of Bayelsa	For the theft of over 2.111 million litres of crude oil with monetary value of over 2.4 billion naira
December 31, 2013	A boat	4 Cameroonians and 3 Nigerians	Agbani area, near Bakassi LGA between Nigeria-Cameroon border	For the theft of 134 drum containing over 250 litres of crude oil each
December 26, 2013	MV Eclips	Nine Nigerians in crew	Obi creek, Bayelsa state	For the theft of 870,000 litres of crude oil
October 23, 2013	MT Frankesen	3 Ghanians and 9 Nigerians	Akassa community in Brass LGA of Bayelsa state	For the theft of over 1,092,000 litres of crude oil
October 07, 2013	Milandros and Ebba, belonging to PWS integrated services limited	9 Ghanians and 9 Nigerians	Bonny Anchorage in Rivers State	The vessel, Milandros, was intercepted where a six-inche diameter hose over a distance of 1,000 metters from the vessel which was connected to pipeline while Ebba vessel was arrested for the theft of 282 tons of crude oil products
September 25, 2013	MV Jehovah Miracles 3” and a wooden boat	15 Nigerians on a separate raids	Brass Rivers in Bayelsa state	The small tug boat and wooden boat were arrested for the carriage of theft crude without proper permit
September 6, 2013	MT Pauline	9 Nigerians and a Cameroonian	Atlantic fringe of Brass in Brass LGA of Bayelsa state	For the theft of 360,000 litre of crude oil products.

September 3, 2013	Two barges christened CWTC 16 & Tikoro 2	11 crew members	Kasabobo creek, southern Ijaw LGA, Bayelsa state	For the theft of unverified amount of crude oil
August 26, 2013	MV Sea Giant	11 Nigerians and a Cameroonian	Egweama community waterway in Brass LGA of Bayelsa	For the theft of locally refined diesel of over 10,000 litres
August 24, 2013	MV Tobiloba	7 Nigerians	Akassa creek in Bayelsa	For the theft of 100,000 litres crude oil products
August 15, 2013	MV Lila and tug boat named MV St. Victoria	Six crew members	Odioma waterways in Brass LGA of Bayelsa	For the theft of unverifiable volume of crude oil
August 11, 2013	Tug S & T Victoria	Six crew members	Kassa creek in Bayelsa	Salvage operation of MT Lina
July 25, 2013	MV Henty	5 Nigerians and a Ghanaian	Egweama, Brass in Bayelsa state	For illegal conversion from fishing trawler to a bunkering vessel with 132,000 litres of stolen crude oil products
July 23, 2013	MT Rica and MT Favour	14 culprits in MT Rica and 9 in MT Favour 1	MT Rica intercepted along Nun River while MT Favour 1 was caught off Akassa River in Bayelsa state	Both were loaded with over 150,000 and 100,000 litres of stolen crude oil products
July 14, 2013	Cape Hope	14 crew members	Benneth Island in Warri South LGA in Delta State	For the theft of unverified volume of crude oil products and the offering of ₦14 million bribe to JTF to facilitate theft
July 9, 2013	Unregistered vessel	One traditional under and 3 other culprits	Akassa waterways in Brass LGA in Bayelsa state	For the theft of 2000 metric tonnes of crude oil
July 6, 2013	MT WHARF DALE	6 Nigerians	Egweama, Brass in Bayelsa state	For the theft of crude oil in large volume
June 3, 2013	MV DALA	10 culprits	Akassa creeks of southern Ijaw LGA in Bayelsa state	For the theft and loading of 120,000 litres of crude oil products

May 27, 2013	Erishna Dolphin and two bergges	11 culprits	Obi creek in South Ijaw LGA, Bayelsa and Baka creek and Abonema waterfront in Rivers State	The two berges were loaded with 7,500 litres of adultrated automated Gas oil from stolen crude oil
May 22, 2013	MT Swordfish	Three crew members, two staff of liberty jiffy and 20 other suspects of oil theft	Liberty jetty, Elegbata, Marina, Lagos	For the theft of unspecified volume of crude oil
May 3, 2013	Empty V. land	10 culprit	At Bonny high sea in Rives state	For the theft of over 1,300 metric tonnes of crude oil
January 26, 2013	MT Ashkay	10 Indians and 2 Ghanaians	Sangana River, near Port Harcourt in Rivers State	For the theft of over 157,822 litres of crude oil
December 29, 2012	MT Atlantic	9 culprits	The coast of Bonny Island in Rivers state	For the theft of 1000 tonnes of crude oil from oil pipeline
October 17 & 18, 2012	MT Lady Theresa and Pecos Peters	10 Nigerians	Light House Bonny River, in Bonny LGA, Rivers State	The two illegal bunkering vessels and their crew members were arrested for the theft of over 300,000 litres of crude oil products
October 5, 2012	Seven berges	20 Ghanaians, and six Nigerians	Abonnema, Akuku-Toru LGA, Rivers state	All seven berges were fully loaded with stolen crude oil
June 19, 2012	MT ST Vanessa	Nine Filipines and six Romamans	45 nautical miles off Akassa in Bayelsa state	Suspicious activities and loitering around Akassa. Brass for about two weeks without clear and specific mission
May 09, 2012	MT Ami and MT Oso	21 Ghanaians and five Nigerians	Sombeiro River in the South-Eastern part of Degema LGA of Rivers State	For the theft of over 650,000 metric tonnes of stolen crude oil.
November 01, 2011	MV Omiesam and several cotonu boats	Eight crew members and 38 culprits who were mainly foreigners with 13 Cotonu boats and 1 speed boat assembled beside the vessel.	Akassa enclave on the Atlantic fringe of Brass, Bayelsa state	For receiving stolen crude oil products

January 6, 2009	Sandra Valletta Lagos	6 Ghanaians and 1 Nigerian	Chanomic creeks of Warri South West LGA in Delta State	For the theft of over 4,000 metric tonnes of illegally bunkered crude oil with over 1.17 million dollars
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Source: Adapted from Adalonu (2016)

Table 4 shows the involvement of foreigners in the actual theft of crude oil in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria which substantiates further, the angle of international dimension of oil theft in the Niger Delta. The table captured instances of involvement of at least 200 foreigners directly and actively involved in oil theft in the Niger Delta area.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Nature of Oil Theft in the Niger Delta

Data available from different sources, especially relying on the NNPC Annual statistical bulletin of 2015 & 2019, the nature of oil theft in the Niger Delta is basically by stealing through pipeline vandalism. Table 1 shows the frequency of occurrence of oil theft activities through pipeline vandalism across year 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. Under the period of 11 years, a total of 24,054 cases of pipeline vandalisation occurred across main pipeline areas. From 2009-2019, Port Harcourt line (Sys. 2E & 2EX) alone recorded 6826 cases. Warri line (Sys. 2A, 2C & 2CX) recorded 2750 cases in the same period. The Mosimi line (Sys. 2B) had a total of 6874 cases with Kaduna line (Sys. 2D) and Gombe line (Sys. 2D) having 3866 and 3738 cases respectively. These figures show that pipeline vandalisation or third party interference which amounts to oil theft is a major factor defining the nature of oil theft in the Niger Delta.

The theft of oil through pipeline vandalism is in two scales small and industrial scales. Pipeline vandalism takes the shape of pipeline tapping amounting to small-scale level crude oil theft and large or industrial-scale level crude oil theft. This agrees with the position of Katsouris and Sayne (2013) who stated that through pipeline tapping and vandalism, oil theft operators rapture pressure oil pipes in order to siphon crude. Such stolen oil could be for local use which usually is in small scale or in an industrial scale for international consumption. This also agrees with Ralby (2017, p.19) who revealed in his study that oil theft operators indulge in both hot and cold tapping which are ways of stealing crude oil products in the Niger Delta.

Table 2 reveals further the volume of crude oil losses as a consequence of oil theft carried out primarily through pipeline vandalism. The table shows that a total of 553137.09 M³ volume of crude oil was lost within the period under investigation. The Port Harcourt line (Sys. E & 2EX) recorded 39300.33, Mosimi (Sys. 2B) and Warri (Sys. 2A; 2C & 2CX) accounted for 121402.49 and 387732.45 respectively. This shows that the volume of oil losses from oil theft activities is quite high.

The International Dimension of Oil Theft

Table 3 shows data on the international route or movement of oil stolen from the Niger Delta. The table answers the question of what constitutes the international dimension of oil theft. A look at the table reveals that stolen oil from the Niger Delta is moved across different countries of the world. From the data adapted from the NNPC Annual Statistical Bulletin 2018, it is revealed that oil stolen from the Niger Delta is shipped into Western Europe to include France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, Ireland, Turkey, Norway, Denmark, Romania, Poland, Belgium and others. Australia, New Zealand, Solomon Island and Isle of Man are countries in the Oceania/Pacific regions where stolen oil from the Niger Delta are shipped to. Among countries in North America are: Canada, Panama, the United States. In the Far East and Asia are Japan, China, Malaysia, India, Singapore, Indonesia and others. Back home in the African continents, countries such as Ghana, Cote O' Ivoire, Senegal, South Africa, Togo, Cameroon, Gulf of Guinea, Tunisia and Cape Verde among others are the destinations of stolen oil from the Niger Delta.

It is noted however, that these destinations are legal or legitimate destinations for legitimate crude oil trade. But out of collusion with the locals and those in positions of authority in the oil sector, large volumes of stolen oil from the Niger Delta are illegally loaded and moved through such international routes to deliver to oil theft collaborators in various countries.

According to Katsouris and Sayne (2013) the theft of oil is achieved at the point of loading the product for shipment to the identified countries of destination such as China, United States, Thailand, the Balkan, Indonesia, Brazil, Singapore and West African countries. Through administrative collusion by oil workers, security agents and other comprador elements, large volumes of oil not properly accounted for are loaded for shipment at the export terminals. At this point too, documents such as bills of lading are falsified to cover up for stolen oil.

The NNPC 2018 report displayed on table 4.3 shows the destination of crude oil lifted to include Western European countries; Oceania/pacific countries; South American Countries; North American Countries; Asia and Far East Countries, and African countries.

It is imperative to note that the countries identified engage in legitimate oil business with Nigeria. But as it is the case with all syndicate crimes, illegal activities also go on using legitimate means. Criminality goes on beneath the visible outlook of legitimacy. It is that stolen oil is traceable to some or most of the countries of destination as legitimate oil business.

Clearly, narratives from literature indicate that Nigerian stolen oil and its international dimension is traceable through its movement and transportation corridors. Stolen oil is transported with tankers, trucks, vessels and ships from various tap points to local refining sites and foreign destinations.

The movement of stolen oil goes through complex routes in its transit process before and after leaving the shores of the country. Oil criminals tend to adopt and follow normal international passage or right of ways to access the legitimate global oil market through co-loading, a process in which buyers of oil could load product into cargoes on tankers that could carry oil possibly from different countries and or different oil fields. This process of oil movement makes it possible for the same oil cargoes and tankers to load oil in two or more countries or different oilfields meant to be delivered to a particular destination. It also works in ways that a single tanker could convey multiple parcels of the petroleum products which are to be delivered to different parties. When fully loaded, it is called split cargo because each of its parcel gets a bill of lading. This system of transportation and movement of oil is a perfect arrangement that is legal for the movement and transportation of oil.

However, this mode of transportation and movement of legitimate petroleum product provides suitable modality for evacuating stolen oil abroad. Oil criminals fake stolen oil as legitimate product and co-load it adapting to the normal means made available by this process. Volumes stolen from export terminals, oilfields or any other out-land means are loaded in splits having legal and stolen products onboard the same split cargoes and falsified bill of lading for the stolen parcel attached for smooth sail.

While onboard international routes for delivery to destination countries, a mother ship could offload its entire content of stolen oil in one or several refining points. She could off load same to storage, a facility that enables blending of oil and helps notorious dealers to stockpile product in anticipation for improved global market price. The storage facilities are either stationed on land or afloat the sea, and the blending helps to conceal the originating countries of stolen oil. New bills of lading are said to be re-generated as stolen oil is possibly broken into smaller parcels thereby, creating ambiguous complexities in understanding the originality of the bill of lading generated in the originating country (Katsouris & Sayne, 2013, p.32).

Another way a mother ship discharges stolen oil is by transferring the entire content of its cargo to either one vessel or multiple other vessels. The transfer of stolen oil into vessel(s) is said to be done far out of Nigerian waters, the same way legitimate transfer of cargo is done offshore. Just as illegal oil is shipped in disguise as legitimate stock, illicit oil from Nigeria infiltrate legitimate international oil markets and countries which engage in legitimate oil business with Nigeria. The United States, Latin America, Eastern Europe, Asia and African countries are possible destinations of stolen oil from Nigeria.

The United States is historically known to be Nigeria's largest oil consumer, yet it has the reputation for absorbing Nigeria's stolen oil just as she buys legitimate product. It is alleged that oil thieves offload

parcels of stolen oil and store in caravans and tanks. Some countries possess massive storage facilities for the receipt of illicit parcels while others may not, but play significant role in providing possible transit for stolen oil from Nigeria. Weak border control has also provided easy passage of stolen oil, designating such countries with weak border control as conduits for smuggling illicit parcels of crude oil possibly with Nigerian origin.

With regard to identity of oil theft culprits or actors, it has been mentioned in several sources that locals engage in most small scale theft of oil. The narratives on collaboration, collusion or conspiracy between and among different calibers of persons give clear indication that, on the larger picture of the oil theft malady, politicians, businessmen, international oil companies staff, foreigners and either passively or actively, foreign governments are involved or implicated.

However, a more elucidating account of involvement of foreigners captures the nationalities of persons who have had to be arrested in connection with stolen oil. These person, outside the common knowledge that the Niger Delta youths indulge in militancy and stealing of oil include Ghanaians, Russians, Cameroonians, Greeks, Filipinos, Ukrainians, Romanians, Georgians and many others. While the local dimension of oil theft is mainly dominated by locals, the international dimension of the oil theft crime relates largely to foreign operators who facilitate the execution of the illicit trade on stolen oil off and beyond the shores of Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

Based on investigations carried out through the review of secondary material it was concluded that Oil theft is carried out majorly through pipeline vandalism and administrative collusion which enable oil theft operators to siphon and evacuate larger volumes of crude oil for both local and international consumption. Foreigner's involvement in oil theft activities in the Niger Delta define a dangerous international dimension of oil theft with increased level of economic sabotage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study recommended the following:

1. Government and the multinational oil companies should upgrade and maintain effective surveillance of oil pipelines to minimise the rate at which oil thieves vandalise oil facilities, and create a monitoring team of well-trained security personnel and bureaucrats to check administrative collusion at export terminals in order to curtail conspiratorial tendencies of government officials, oil workers and illegal oil operators who steal oil at loading points.
2. The Nigerian government and Multinational oil companies should synergise efforts to properly police the borders and effectively monitor oil activities at the export terminals to limit shipment of stolen oil across borders.
3. Governments of countries of origin of foreigners involved in oil theft in the Niger Delta should be held accountable and made to pay reparations to the Nigerian government over economic sabotage and social insecurity caused by oil theft.

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