

## **A CITIZEN CAMPAIGN AGAINST ENVIROMENTAL POLLUTION IN RIVERS STATE**

Street, OLD GRA,Port Harcourt, Rivers State,Nigeria GSM:08033106186

January 24, 2018

Theresa May  
**The Prime Minister**  
United Kingdom  
10 Downing Street  
London

Dear Sir,

**RE: SOOT IN RIVERS STATE: SAVE OUR SOUL**

### **BACKGROUND:**

We are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria domiciled in the hub of the hydrocarbon industry called Rivers State which houses circa five million people. The state has been in the heart of the exploration and refining of the oil and gas sector. This has over the years led to an imbalance in urban migration, crime and population explosion without a commensurate enhancement of its social and physical infrastructure.

It is common knowledge how the absence of best practice in the pursuit of the objectives of the international oil companies led to social upheavals eventual death of the likes of late Ken Saro-Wiwa and others, even the fallout of those gruesome experiences like the UNEP report has till date remained unimplemented.

It is our belief that devoid of political correctness, an intervention by the international community with the support of multilateral agencies like the United Nations would have pressured all the stake holders to do the right thing and commence the clean-up and remediation of the environment in Ogoni and its environs but this has not been the case.

The medical consequences are being unveiled as the people marinate in acid rain, polluted air and tainted crops arising from the failure of the state at all levels in Nigeria, the home governments of the International Oil Companies and the World Health Organization refuse to sound the alarm and prevent further deaths.



To this end, we hereby make the following prayers through the British Prime Minister to the British Parliament:

**DECLARE A HEALTH EMERGENCY:**

1. Prevail on the Nigerian Government to declare a Public Health Emergency in Rivers State, and mobilize medical and relief efforts to manage a potential public health disaster from pollution.
2. Prevail on the Nigerian Government to sponsor a multi-stakeholder air quality study and Health Impact Study, to unravel the real extent of damage done, and the far reaching implications of the consistent air pollution through the years.
3. Mobilize Medical and Humanitarian aid from nations with strategic interest in the Nigerian Hydrocarbon industry, in response to the medical emergency in Rivers State.

**ENFORCE BEST PRACTICISE:**

1. Prevail on the Nigerian Government, through their regulatory agencies, to ensure proper compliance and monitoring of the entire hydrocarbon industry, in line with global best practices.
2. Prevail on the Nigerian Government and her JV-Partners (mostly with Western origin) to protect their oil assets, to cut the supply of artisanal refineries.
3. Prevail on other nations, such as USA, France, Netherlands and Italy, with strategic interests in the Nigerian Hydrocarbon industry, to ensure that their interests in Nigeria operate in line with global best practices.

**REVIEW OF THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK IN NIGERIA :**

1. Prevail on the Nigerian Government and her JV-Partners to stop or reduce to globally acceptable level, the raging gas flares in the Niger Delta Region. A dead line be promulgated for the IOCs.
2. Prevail on the Nigerian Government and the legislature to re-work their environmental laws, to make it more encompassing to include states and local governments to be proactive and effective.

**REVIEW OF SECURITY/DECOMMISSIONING OF PLANTS/ STORAGE & ACCOUNTABILTY FOR IMPOUNDED PRODUCTS:**

1. Prevail on the Nigerian Government to desist from violent destruction of artisanal refineries and oil storage facilities, but should instead decommission such, in line with global best practices.
2. The security team should include representatives from the Federal Ministry of Finance, Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Auditor General of the Federation, Attorney General of the federation.



3. There should be dedicated Tank farms for storing impounded crude oil and illegally refined products, while the vessels seized should be stored at dedicated jetty. On conclusion of the matters in court these exhibits can be sold or auctioned.

**CONCLUSION:**

Issues of Air Pollution have multinational and cross-border implications. It is only a matter of time, and this consistent pollution, will be carried by air currents, across the borders of states and countries, and the impact could potentially be felt even as far as Great Britain.

Nigeria is a former colony of the Great Britain, and a consistent ally down the years. The first oil prospecting and mining license in Nigeria was given to a British interest. To date, British interests are at the centre of the hydrocarbon industry, and the largest JV-Partner to the Nigerian Government. Therefore, we are of the believe that the Government and People of Great Britain, will not turn a blind eye on millions of people in Rivers State, now choking on soot and inhaling dangerous levels of PM from the hydrocarbon industry.

We present this petition with One hundred and Sixty-five (165) signatories, believing that as a responsible government with respect for life and fundamental rights, you will grant our prayers.

Thank you.

For: **A CITIZENS CAMPAIGN AGAINST ENVIROMENTAL POLLUTION IN RIVERS STATE**

1. Eugene Abels .....  

2. Tunde Bello.....  

3. Sibe Robinson Tombare .....
4. Kofi Batez.....



### **THE DELIBERATE POLLUTION OF THE AIR IN RIVERS STATE:**

In the last one year, Rivers State, especially parts of Port Harcourt and environs, have been experiencing soot (Particulate Matter) in alarming proportions. Particulate Matter is a complex mixture of tiny solid particles and liquid droplets, such as dust, soot, fumes, smoke, etc. In terms of sizes, they are classified as those smaller than 2.5 microns (PM 2.5) and those equal to or smaller than 10 microns (PM 10).

Soot is formed as a result of incomplete combustion of hydrocarbon. There are local and international guidelines and thresholds for exposure to Particulate Matter. Exposure to this, beyond the acceptable levels can cause or aggravate respiratory conditions (which expectedly appears to be on the increase recently), and other health challenges. Preliminary Air Quality Studies have showed disturbing levels of PM, clearly above acceptable thresholds.

It is also worthy of note to state that towns like Bonny and Finima suffer from the gross effect of acid rain as evident from their roofs, while Eleme town and the Okrika villages of Akrikana and Okari suffer from the downside of the activities of the refinery, petrochemical and fertilizer plants in their areas. The ecosystem of Omoku have been distorted by permanent daylight from the giant gas flares in the community. The economics of gas flaring have made the fines more attractive to the "state" than the eradication of flares.

### **POTENTIAL SOURCES:**

Every case of pollution must have a source, and this is not different. To arrive at a conclusive statement on the key source(s), there is a need for detailed air quality study, factoring in air dispersion models, wind data over time and even remote sensing. However, from general knowledge, the following are potential sources of the soot in Rivers State:

- (1) Proliferation and activities of illegal Artisanal Refineries
- (2) Uncontrolled destruction of illegal Artisanal Refineries by the Military
- (3) Activities of the Organized Hydrocarbon Industry
- (4) Activities of Heavy Industries ( Refineries, Petrochemical Plants, Gas & Asphalt Plant, etc)
- (5) Uncontrolled burning of tyres for roasting livestock & retrieving the Copper wires
- (6) Others (Generators, Automobile, etc)

### **OUR PRAYERS :**

We have watched with dismay, the seeming non-action by the authorities responsible. As at this moment, Nigerians are dying in numbers of causes, not unconnected with the increasing pollution. As stated earlier, preliminary air quality studies have revealed PM levels, potentially harmful to the vulnerable – the young, the aged and those with respiratory conditions.

