

Buhari Administration and the Nigerian Niger-Delta Region, 2015 – 2021

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the Buhari administrations response to the myriad of problems in the Niger Delta region. The role it played in stopping the volatile and insecurity of the region. The research also traced the history of the Region in Nigeria. A retrospect and review of the facts was made, in order that scholars would have an insight on perceptions as well as the strategic challenges the Buhari administration passed through in bringing peace to the region.

The study relied on documentary data. The documentary data were sourced from newspapers, journal papers, internet sources and correspondence. The documentary was subjected to internal and external criticism for authentication, and then to textual and contextual analyses. It also complimented the secondary data with few primary data, from interviews.

The research identified the reasons why the Niger Delta is considered most peaceful of all the regions in Nigeria.

Keywords: Economy, Peace, Amnesty, Small Arms

INTRODUCTION

Today, unity is our greatest concern and it is the duty of every one of us to work to strengthen it. Bitterness due to political differences will carry Nigeria nowhere and I appeal to all political leaders throughout the country to try to control their extremists. Nigeria is large enough to accommodate us all in spite of our political differences.[\[i\]](#)

What led to the political takeover of the military in 1966 began not just from the period of independence but further back in the 1950s or, as some Nigerians tend to understand it, in 1914 when Nigeria became amalgamated[\[ii\]](#). Ahmadu Bello opined or also supported that the amalgamation of 1914 was a mistake[\[iii\]](#). At independence, Nigeria existed as three regions, each dominated by a political party based on the support of the majority ethnic community in the region[\[iv\]](#). Thus, there was a Hausa-Fulani-dominated Northern People's Congress (NPC) government in the North, a Yoruba-dominated Action Group (AG) government in the West, and an Igbo-dominated National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) government in the East[\[v\]](#). From 1954 to the first coup of 1966 there was rivalry among the two southern parties (AG and NCNC) to win a political alliance with the NPC and thus share political leadership at the centre. Obafemi Awolowo and Nnamdi Azikiwe, as leaders of their parties, stood for elections to the central House[\[vi\]](#). The Sardauna of Sokoto, Ahmadu Bello, however, chose to remain in his northern power base and to leave his deputy to represent the NPC in Lagos[\[vii\]](#). Awolowo was dissatisfied with the existing regional base of the AG, and wanted the existing parties to cut across regional boundaries[\[viii\]](#). Hence in the 1959 election, he

attempted to break into the north and east. Awolowo had sought support for the AG from the ethnic minorities in the East and North by championing the course of creating more states[[ix](#)]. As Awolowo remarked,

I feel confident that our wishes in this regard will be readily granted after our victory at the polls, and three new states will come into existence accordingly before October 1, 1960. If the Middle Belt State is to be created, the merging of Ilorin-Kabba Divisions with the Western Region is *impso facto* a foregone conclusion[[x](#)].

Consequently, he incurred the bitter resentment of leaders of the NPC and NCNC. It was against this background of deep-rooted distrust and conflict among Nigerian politicians that Nigeria became independent on October 1, 1960. Nigeria was governed by an NPC-NCNC coalition with Dr Azikiwe (NCNC) as Governor-General and Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (NPC) as Prime Minister[[xi](#)].

The Action Group, although well-organised at the initial stages became enmeshed in a crisis of personalities [[xii](#)]. A conflict arose between Awolowo and Ladoke Akintola, the deputy leader of the party. Awolowo in 1959 surrendered the premiership of the Western Region to Akintola in the hope of becoming the Prime Minister of Nigeria. It was the Action Group's failure to secure some kind of alliance with the other political parties that revealed a portent for the future[[xiii](#)]. Azikiwe and Awolowo's dislike for each other was profound that it would have been a mere illusion that these two would come together under one umbrella. Azikiwe and Awolowo represented two strands of the nationalist movement: Azikiwe was unabashedly capitalist while Awolowo believed in a social welfare state, which is understandable for a man who claimed to have been influenced while as a student in London by Harold Laski[[xiv](#)]. With the NPC, the cooperation with the AG might have been successful but for Awolowo, who then had contempt for the NPC leadership and particularly for its autocratic leader, Ahmadu Bello, the scion of the ruling Sokoto dynasty and the representative of the seemingly arrogant and uncompromising attitude of the Northern elite who tended to look at their southern colleagues with a lot of scepticism and watch every step made by the southerners with a lot of distrust. Ahmadu Bello expressed his suspicions thus:

When I went to Lagos in 1949, I met for the first time, and saw in action, Nigerian politicians of the calibre of Dr Azikiwe, I began to see that we in the North would have to take politics seriously before long[[xv](#)].

The NPC hierarchy was also less inclined towards the Action Group leaders who for the first time in the political history of Nigeria really gave the NPC a political run for its money, particularly in the 1959 elections. The events before and shortly after independence clearly gave an indication that political enemy have been made from the east and north. Awolowo's federalist ideas seemed to be singing beautiful songs to the minorities whose reawakening were not in accord with the interest of the other political parties. The political situation, however, was more complex for Awolowo than expressed. On the eve of the 1959 Federal election the NPC and NCNC agreed not to interfere in the internal affairs of the other regions, but the AG stance was to intensify its support for ethnic minority agitation for more states in the Northern and Eastern Regions[[xvi](#)]. The NPC-led government responded in 1961 by proposing to create a Mid-West state around Benin City out of the non-Yoruba minorities of the West.

The crisis which split the Action Group into two first originated between Awolowo and Ladoke Akintola. Among those who supported Awolowo were Anthony Enahoro, Jonathan Odebiyi, Bola Ige and Lateef Jakande and many others . Akintola's supporters included Sanya Dojo Onabamiro, Akin Osuntokun, Akinola Maja to mention a few[[xvii](#)]. The Ooni of Ife, the Governor of Western region, held a meeting with the two factions in an attempt to reconcile the Awolowo and Akintola groups. Rotimi Williams, who was the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice in the Western Region, also set up a reconciliation committee for the two factions. After the two reconciliation attempts, the committee decided to refer the matter to the National Executive Council of the Action Group[[xviii](#)]. Akintola was alleged to have been found guilty of

the charges of mal-administration, anti-party activities, disloyalty and gross indiscipline. A new premier was appointed to replace Akintola[xix]. The new premier was D.S. Adegbenro, the parliamentary leader in the House. Akintola, however, filed a motion in the High Court at Ibadan challenging the legality of his removal from office.

The two factions of the Action Group were refused police protection in any meeting in the Western House of Assembly. Unfortunately, the second attempt to hold the meeting resulted in an uproar and the Prime Minister then intervened by declaring a state of emergency. In his broadcast, Balewa declared that,

No responsible government of the federation could allow an explosive situation such as that which now exists in the Western Nigeria to continue without taking adequate measures to ensure that there is an early return to the Region of peace, order and good government[xx].

Awolowo did not think the intervention of the central government was justifiable:

It was a gross misuse of power for the federal government to declare a state of emergency; when the Western Region was peaceful and no circumstances warranted it[xxi].

He noted further that,

The step that is now being taken in this resolution is a violent assault of democratic institutions in Nigeria. It assumes that Parliament can only meet at the sufferance of a group of people who are hostile to that particular parliament and who are friendly to the federal government[xxii].

Awolowo, the Action Group leader and thirty of his supporters were charged later with plotting to overthrow the federal government. Awolowo and others were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. In 1962, Awolowo and many of his leading followers were imprisoned on charges of treasonable felony[xxiii].

The announcement of the results of the 1963 federal census in February 1964 further heightened ethnic tension. The results showed that over half of Nigeria's population of fifty-five million lived in the North, which dashed the NCNC's hope that the south would 'win the census' and take over the federal government after the reorganization of constituencies. According to the figures which were published by the federal government on February 25, 1964, the Northern Region's population was put as 29,777,986, while the Eastern Region had 12,388,646, the Western Region recorded 10,278 500 and that of Mid-West and Lagos were 2,533,337 and 675,353, respectively[xxiv]. These figures were based on the 1963 national census, the only one taken between 1953 and 1973. The total was estimated to be 55,558,163. The population figures given after the census exercise showed that the North had more than half of the nation's population. The South believed that the figures were rigged and manipulated. The figures are believed to be exaggerated due to the allocation of parliamentary seats accorded on the basis of population.

The 1963 census precipitated a partial but major boycott of national elections and brought the country to the verge of crisis. However, after some changes were made, the figures were finally accepted by the Western Region, the North and the Federal government[xxv]. On 18 May 1964, the Eastern and Mid-Western governments brought actions in the Supreme Court against the federal government of Nigeria. The substance of the action was that the figures accepted by the other region would do incalculable injustice and injuries to the allocation of seats to the Eastern Region in the House of Representatives in Lagos. They lost the case on the grounds that they failed to convince the court on the number of seats they should have in the House of Representatives, so that the court can help the East and Mid-West enforce their wish. The census led to a new alliance between the NCNC, the AG and the small opposition parties of the North which together formed the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA). They opposed the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA), composed of the NPC and the NNDP, in the 1964-65 election[xxvi].

Although there was widespread violence and vote-rigging, the elections were not cancelled, and the NNA claimed to have won in the Western Region. After a few days of crisis, Azikiwe and Balewa patched up a federal government of NNA and UPGA (but not AG) members. The 1965 election in the West became a political battle between the Akintola-led Nigeria National Democratic Party (NNDP) and Adegbenro led UPGA (AG). For the chief ally of the NNDP, the NPC, an AG victory in the Western Region was least desirable. As the UPGA had feared, the election result gave victory to Akintola's NNDP. As a result, widespread discontent, frustration and disillusionment were felt over the election in the Western Region. Protests and demonstrations broke out and were expressed in riots, looting and arson. The Prime Minister, Tafawa Balewa, supported Akintola and drafted Federal security forces of mostly Hausa soldiers and anti-riot police squad to sustain Akintola's unpopular regime in power. It was in this turbulent situation, when the government of the Western Region seemed to have lost the power to govern and the Balewa administration seemed not to want to exercise its overall responsibility of maintaining law and order that the military struck in 1966[xxvii].

Many reasons can be adduced to why Nigeria collapsed under the first civilian regime. The problems that led to the fall of the First Republic can be thus summarised: Action Group Crisis of 1962 was the first link in the chain of decadence that brought about the downfall of the First Republic. The tussle for power between the two rival political factions within the Action Group, in the former Western Region of Nigeria, which were led, respectively by Akintola and Adegbenro, was arrested by the intervention of the Balewa administration through the declaration of a state of emergency within that region. Following almost immediately was the controversial population census exercise in 1963. The population census in Nigeria was primarily intended to furnish the relevant statistics of the distribution of people in the country. The regional premiers were vocal in criticizing the alleged rigging of census officers by rival political parties who were only interested in the bloating of the figures of their regional base. There also followed in quick succession the Nigeria Federal election during which hundreds of people were arrested for election offences [xxviii]. This unprecedented rigging led to confrontation between Nnamdi Azikiwe (President) and Tafawa Balewa (as Prime Minister) and after a protracted dialogue the election crisis was also resolved. One must in addition comment that ethnic rivalries were deeply embedded in the various political parties in existence and the results of these rivalries were fatal to the nation. These political parties were deeply enmeshed in tribal sectionalism. However lofty their policies were, it was clear that they were representing ethnic interests.

Although there was tension in Nigeria nothing seemed to betray what transformation the nation was to undergo politically. The threat of insurrection remained within the military, and the unprecedented event of coup-plotting in 1966 gave rise to fear and suspicion among military personnel of the various ethnic groups who then saw coups as foreign import to the nation. However, on the night of January 14, Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu addressed Nigerians.

Our enemies are the political profiteers, swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek bribes and demand ten per cent, those that seek to keep the country permanently divided so that they can remain in office as ministers and VIPS of waste, the tribalists, the nepotists, those that make the country look big for nothing before international circles. [xxix]

The coup would have been a success in the North but for the incident that happened in Kano. Lt. Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu, who was then in charge of the 5th battalion of the Nigerian army stationed in Kano, played a decisive role in ensuring the collapse of the coup in the North. Ojukwu refused to succumb to Nzeogwu's pressure but instead gave his support to General J.T.U. Aguiyi Ironsi[xxx].

Their southern counterparts might have been successful on the night of January 14-15 but for the narrow escape of General Ironsi[xxxi]. It was at a party in the Lagos home of Brigadier Zakariya Maimalari that Ironsi was slated to be arrested or killed that night. Ironsi was at the Maimalari party and later went to

another party aboard the Elder Dempster mail boat *Aureol* at Apapa[xxxii]. When he finally got home, it was Lt. Colonel James Pam, who warned him that something was happening within the Nigerian Army. Pam was shot later by the dissident soldiers. At Ikeja, Ironsi, who had risen through the ranks, was able to manoeuvre and got to his aide, and loyal soldiers who in turn changed the course of the coup[xxxiii]. The coup had been foiled and the leaders unable to make the change they desired for the country. Power now had to fall on the laps of a man who was not among the original coup planners. Major General Aguiyi Ironsi became the first Nigerian military leader. Ironsi ruled Nigeria for just six months before his compatriots in the Army killed him[xxxiv].

The Niger-Delta region in this paper comprises the following states: Ondo State, Edo State, Delta State, Rivers State, Cross River State, Akwa Ibom State and Bayelsa State. Although in the Nigerian context Anambra State, Abia State and Imo State are categorized as the Niger-Delta Region. However, this paper emphasis is seen in terms of its geography not in terms of its economy and mineral resources.

The Niger Delta Region: Pre- Buhari Administration

In 1969 the Nigerian government came up with the Niger-Delta Development Board, but later scrapped it without significant use. This was the first set back to the region; when the Aguiyi Ironsi regime came to power in 1966. Decree No. 34, began what later became a problem to the Niger-Delta region[xxxv]. It was because of the hierarchy of the military's command and control that brought so much power to the center. This was inimical to the democratic republic that was, before the military took over in January 15, 1966. The power at the Centre gave power to those who ruled from the capital, not taken cognizance to the land that had the resources. Sixty-four issues were lumped on the exclusive list and the centers were given unwieldy power. The Irony of this decision was that Ironsi was from the region that would have benefitted the most if resources gains were allowed to be enjoyed by the people[xxxvi].

In the First Republic, before Decree 34, resources were benefitted by the people whose land was explored. In the First Republic, for instance, each of the three regions had its own Coat of Arms and Flags; produce from their land were used for the benefit of the owners and tax paid to the center. Niger Delta Basin Development Authority came up in 1970 alongside ten other Basin Development Authorities but remained ineffective. A policy that sets aside 1.5 percent of funds from the Federation Account was put in place in 1981[xxxvii]. This policy also failed in the Second Republic, failed and abandoned projects contracted then attest to this.

Agitations from many groups in the region equally gave birth to the oil Mineral Producing Areas Development better known as OMPADEC in 1992, the 13 percent derivation formula and the NDDC in 2000[xxxviii]. The situation in last century coupled with the crisis between the Niger-Delta tribes allowed for the militancy that cropped up in the 21st century. Notable events in the 20th century such as the Ken Saro Wiwa and Ogoni environmental agitation; the Ijaw and Itsekiri crisis, the Ijaw and Ilaje crisis, and some other minor issues encouraged the militancy that erupted in the 21st century[xxxix]. However, strange this could be, these events nurtured the later militancy of the 21st century. For instance, during the Ijaw and Itsekiri crisis or the Ijaw and Ilaje crisis; weapons that were used became a fulcrum for training and use of small and light weapons that encouraged the agitation against the federal government. These crises encouraged military discipline, military strategy, oil bunkering, and the necessary weapons to be used for the civil strife against the other tribes. It was no wonder after the tribal crises ended that amassed small and light weapons were adapted for the militancy against the Federal Government. The Ijaws were the most prepared, judging from the antecedents of the past small wars. As Nigeria evolved into the 21st century, the Niger-Delta agitated for the following, that some had duff-tailed from the 20th century. These were the demands of the Niger-Deltas: as the granting of oil blocs; need for Nigeria to enforce zero gas flaring deadline, and the control of the resources on the Niger-Delta regional land.

It is a fall out from these agitations that 13% derivation from oil producing states was given back to them. Although the communities preferred that the 13% oil derivation should not be given to the states but to the communities that bear the brunt. The Niger-Delta is one of the most volatile regions in Nigeria prior to the emergence of the Goodluck Jonathan administration. Despite the human, natural and materials endowments of this important part of Nigeria, what has become recurring decimal are restiveness, kidnappings, bombing of oil installations and disruptions in business activities. Series of interventions and programmes have been embarked upon by governmental and nongovernmental actors to improve the fortunes of the people and states. This include the Ministry of Niger-Delta Affairs, Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the presidential Amnesty Programme, and the derivation policy of the Federal Government. Apart from Lagos, no other state outside the Niger-Delta Region is rich compared to the Niger-Delta States.

The Amnesty Programme was announced by President Umaru Musa Yaradua on June 26, 2009 to give unconditional pardon to militants in the Niger-Delta and assuage them to end pipeline vandalism and insurgency that had become common pre-2009[xi]. The programme was to last for 60 days beginning on August 6 and ending October 4, 2009[xii]. During the 60 day period, armed youths were required to surrender their weapons to the government in return for training and rehabilitation. Military led their groups to surrender weapons such as rocket-propelled grenades, guns explosives and ammunition. Even gunboats were surrendered to the government. Over 30,000 militants signed up between October 2009 and May 2011 in exchange for monthly payments and in some illucrative contracts for guarding the pipeline. Whereas, the programme proved to be a success, with violence and kidnappings decreasing sharply and petroleum production and increased exports from about 700,000 barrels per day in mid- 2009 to between 2.2 million barrel per day and 2.4 million barrel per day. The government during the Jonathan regime spent billions in training, and rehabilitation of the ex-militants.

The Buhari Administration and the Niger Deltan Region

With allocation averaging ₦300 billion naira yearly, budget analysis showed that nothing less than a trillion naira has been expended into the Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC) between 2011 and 2019. Even though statistics indicated that the funds were not fully released, most Nigerians maintain that the gap between the resources flowing into the region and the reality in the Niger-Delta were world apart. The NDDC Act mandates oil companies to pay dues of about 3 percent of their yearly budgets to the commission notwithstanding the 13 percent derivative received by oil producing states and the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SPDC) as much as \$2 billion dollars as been spent on the NDDC. The economy of the Niger-Delta is yet to meet the aspirations of Nigerians. For instance, while the average life expectancy in the country stands at 55 years, in the Niger-Delta its 10 years lower, that is 45 years, a report from an online group disclosed. Similarly, while 67.1 percent of Nigerians are reportedly living in poverty, the report online disclosed that 88 percent of rural dwellers in the Niger-Delta are also considered to be poor[xlii].

Despite this seemingly colossal waste in the Niger-Delta, demands were also made onto the government by the people. The resolution of pending law and justice issues of some communities were demanded by the people. The restructuring and robust funding of the Niger-Delta Development Commission and the Ministry of the Niger-Delta Affairs and a comprehensive resettlement plan to reduce the risk of making the region a stateless people were demanded by the communities in the Niger-Delta. On economic development and empowerment they also wanted the Brass Liquefied Natural Gas and the Fertilizer project included in the train 7, with a view to updating the national gas master plan, creation of a Niger-Delta Industrial corridor; expedition work on the export processing zones; harvesting the huge rain fed agriculture and reducing military occupation of the communities in the regions which they claimed was responsible for the continued militancy in the Niger-Delta.

The Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osibajo, spoke for the Buhari Administration when he pleaded with the people to embrace peace, assuring that the present administration was committed to the development of the region. Osinbajo, disclosed that no fewer than 20,000 people had died in the Niger-Delta following pipeline vandalism and other hazards. Osinbajo visit to the Niger-Delta region curbed the militants who were already bombing pipelines in Niger-Delta for uninterrupted oil exploration. His visit increased daily production from about 1.5 million at the peak of the militancy to the present over 2 million barrels per day.

Idongesit Nkanga opined that during the militancy in the period of the Buhari Administration, oil production dropped from about 2.2 million barrels per day to between 700,000 to 800,000 barrels. At a point, oil production rose up to about 2.35 million barrels per day and this translates to ₦33 billion a day at a rate of N300 to a Dollar. Despite this large sum made from the Niger-Delta the Federal Government was accused of not showing a goodwill to the region. For instance, in 2016, Akwa-Ibom State had the least allocation in capital budget. The government of Akwa-Ibom argued that it produced over 40% of the national revenue of Nigeria but wondered that it received the least capital allocation. Akwa-Ibom got ₦1.96 billion, the whole of the South-South received ₦25 billion, South East was given ₦28.5 billion, while Kano State alone earned ₦30 billion. Kano State is a non-oil producing state. But the Federal Government can argue rightly that it has done so much for the Niger-Delta by paying the seven states of the region, the 13 percent derivation, establishing the NDDC by paying the 7 states of the region the 13 percent derivation, establishing the NDDC to plan and execute key projects for the region and establishing a special ministry to coordinate the development of the Niger-Delta. As at 2016, NDDC owed about N800 billion, the amount it is owing the contractor in 2021 is around ₦1 trillion. President Muhammadu Buhari unhappy with the corruption going on at the NDDC, called for a probe of the NDDC. The probe begins from 2001, pre his administration. Buhari insisted that the Niger-Delta region cannot prove the level of spending going into the land space. However, despite his argument, the government and the NDDC claims to have done a lot in the training and infrastructural development of the place; on training, under the Buhari administration, the Presidential Amnesty Programme Training Centre in Karama, Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government of Bayelsa State; Agadagba Obon Training Centre in Ondo State; Obuama in Rivers State and Gele-Gele in Edo State.

The Presidential Amnesty Programme Coordinator, Prof. Dokubo said the centres were set up to commence building human capacity to fill gaps in the lower and middle cadre levels of the highly competitive oil and gas sector of the nations. He said, that the Buhari administration through the Amnesty Programme has trained over 13,000 ex-agitators in the Niger-Delta region. Dokubo said, the training centres located in different places in the Niger-Delta would train ex-militants in specializations like mechatronics, drilling technology, instrumentation, and control and many others[xliii]. The intention of government would be training the Niger-Deltans in specializations that is useful to the oil industry. The government had enrolled as trainees, 1,401 persons while 1,165 persons have received entrepreneurial start up packs after being severally trained. About 1,230 Niger-Deltan beneficiaries of the programme have been offered fully funded scholarship and enrolled in 11 partnering institutions of higher learning in the country. While 207 student have been spread to over 60 institutions in more than 18 nations in the world.

Although, agriculture is difficult in so many Niger-Deltan terrain, the Buhari Administration implemented and kicked off the vocational training centre in Agadagba Obon; Ondo State and another in Gelegele, Edo State; to train Niger-Deltan youths in agriculture. The foundation laying ceremony was performed February 15, 2018. Despite the investment, made in the Niger-Delta, Beleme and Offion Ama communities within the oil mining lease (OML 25) facility in Rivers State, complained that in spite of the fact, contributing about 45,000 barrels daily to the Nigerian economy, it had no school and hospital built in the communities. President Buhari promised to build the amenities[xliv].

On security issues, Ijaw Youth Council, IYC, boss, Mr. Eric Omare, and Comrade Austin Ozobo, National President of Ijaw Peoples Development Initiative; the leaders of the ethnic group that is at the forefront of militancy. The act of destroying materials used for bunkering and local refineries and in the process

destroying the environment was against the law. The Ijaw leaders, specifically said, the National Environmental Regulations, 2011 linked to the National Government Standards and Regulations Agency Act 2007 Outlaws the Act of Security Agencies burning bush and forest in the name of destroying local refineries groups^[xliv].

Ezansagbene community complained bitterly about how the military burnt down their communities in the guise of burning an abandoned local boat containing diesel products on the shore of the area. The military went and apologized to the community over their action and promised to pay compensation, ‘which they are yet to pay’ as at when this paper is written. The Etegele community in the Niger-Delta, argued against military lawlessness. Same complains also came from the Gbaramutu Kingdom, lamenting how the military is destroying the waterways and our environment by disposing the crude content on the surface of the water.

The Ijaw leader agreed that security agencies are under the control of the Federal Government but explained that there is always room for cooperation between the federal and state government on security issues. The military under strict Federal Government directives claimed in 2018 that it arrested 266 suspected criminals and it recovered 230 arms in operation 777 in Niger-Delta. The military under the code name of operation 777 led to the recovery of 230 different types of arms, 240 assorted ammunitions, 11 barges, 101 outboard engines and 78 other boats. Other items included 13 tanker trucks, 51 other vehicles, 135 pumping machines and 34 generating set. In 2018, the launch of operation 777, the Task Force has destroyed 426 illegal refineries. Also destroyed were 609 Cotonou boats, 1,507 surface tanks and 1,538 drums used for illegal bunkering. A militant, one of the most wanted militants and a member of “Kill and Bury” gang, as at 2018. Gift Apollo was arrested at Okariki in Bayelsa State^[xlvi].

CONCLUSION

The Niger Delta should be compared to the Middle East rich oil cities such as Kuwait and Dubai. It is however sad that a nation like Nigeria has done very little to develop the territory. The Niger Delta environs remains backward in terms of poor infrastructures, under development, and so many more. The focus of the research was to identify and highlight these problems and to examine the role played by the Buhari administration in the development of the Niger-Delta. The Buhari Administration was able to make the once turbulent Niger Delta peaceful. This is a major achievement of the administration. The administration had landmark projects in this region. The rail projects scattered in the various Niger Delta communities. The 2nd Niger Bridge that links the Niger Delta with the Eastern Region is also pacifying to the people of the Niger Delta. The training vocational projects, educational sponsorship of youths in National and International Institutions; and many more projects around the Niger Delta is important in keeping the peace. The budgetary allocation to the NDDC and Niger Delta Ministry is also pacifying to the people.

FOOT NOTES

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[xliv] The Guardian, "Engage PANDEF on Niger Delta Now!' 30 September, 2018, p.12

[xlv] Ibid

[xlvi] The Guardian, "Niger Delta Amnesty Project Probe", Editorial', 14 March, 2019, p.18