

LEADERSHIP ASSASSINATION AND MOVEMENT SURVIVAL: THE OSONI AND ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS IN NIGERIA

John Agbonifo, PhD

Lecturer, Department of Political Sciences,
Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria
Email: agbonifo1@gmail.com.

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Iro Aghedo*

Lecturer, Department of Political Science and Public Administration,
University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria
Email: iroaghedo@yahoo.com.

Abstract

This paper engages with the view that killing a leader emasculates a movement. The view has recently been given theoretical leverage in social movement studies by scholars who attempt to establish the link between the death of a leader and the demise of a movement, and, more generally, under what conditions such an outcome emerge. While the literature admits that there is no invariable link between the death of a leader and movement demise, it is fuzzy on the question of when a movement dies. However, it makes the hasty claim that the death of Ken Saro-Wiwa marked the demise of the Ogoni movement. The validity of the claims is tested against empirical evidence.

Keywords: Movement, Leader, Ogoni, Boko Haram, Nigeria

Introduction

Boko Haram

In 2002, Muslim cleric Mohammed Yusuf formed Boko Haram in Maiduguri, capital city of Borno State, located in the northeast of Nigeria. The hitherto peaceful sect embarked on an armed uprising in

June 2009 in the avowed attempt to establish Islamic state in northern Nigeria. The Boko Haram uprising was, however, crushed by the military in July 2009. In the wake of the military crackdown over 800 persons, mostly sect members, had been killed. The radical sect leader, Yusuf, and some members of the sect, including Yusuf's father-in-law, Alhaji Baba Fugu,

were arrested and summarily executed in police custody. Beginning from January 2010, aggrieved surviving members of the sect regrouped and mounted methodical terror attacks against given targets, including innocent civilians, security agencies, and political leaders.

Popularly called Boko Haram or “Western education is sin”, the radical sect calls itself *Jama'atul Alhul Sunnah Lidda'watal jihad*, or “people committed to the propagation of the prophet's teachings and jihad.” Yusuf was a disciple of the salafist school of thought, which is associated with jihad, and was influenced by Ibn Taymiyyah, a fourteenth century legal scholar who is considered a “major theorist” for radical groups in the Middle East. Boko Haram’s stated objective is establishment of a fully Islamic state in Nigeria, including the implementation of criminal Sharia courts across the country.

Boko Haram has since claimed responsibility for a series of high-profile suicide attacks and bomb explosions. The sect began its offensive by launching attacks against public buildings and police stations on 24 December 2003 in Yobe state. In a spectacular but deadly move, the sect launched a devastating suicide attack against the United Nations (UN) building in Abuja. That singular offensive claimed many lives. Earlier, the Inspector-General (IG) of the Nigerian Police narrowly escaped death when a suicide bomber trailed the IG’s convoy to the police headquarters and detonated his bomb. Indiscriminate attacks have been launched against churches, local bars, bank, security buildings and personnel and newspaper houses. Human Rights Watch

estimates that over 935 persons have been killed since 2009 in Boko Haram-related attacks. In 2009, 250 persons were killed. The casualty figure more than doubled in 2011 as the casualty figure rose to 550 in 115 separate events. Boko Haram’s deadliest single operation so far occurred on 20 January 2012 when bomb attacks targeting mainly security formations in Kano state killed a total of 185 policemen and residents.

There is a raging debate on how the Nigerian state should respond to the current Boko Haram uprising that is inching the country into anarchy. While some analysts emphasize the need for conciliatory measures including dialogue and amnesty, many others call for a continuation of the military option, especially the targeting and killing of perpetrators of terrorism (Aghedo and Osumah, 2012; Bello, 2012).

The Ogoni Movement

The Ogoni are an ethnic minority group of about 500,000 people. They occupy a piece of territory located on the coastal plains to the north of the Niger Delta in South-East Nigeria. Shell Oil Company discovered crude oil in Ogoni in 1958 (Saro-Wiwa 1992). Less than two decades later, the negative impacts of oil exploitation, including gas flares, river and land pollution, and crop destruction, had become an issue of concern. By April 1970, Ogoni leaders petitioned the Rivers State government about the hazardous activities of Shell. Shell reacted to the petition by accusing the Ogoni of exaggerated claims. The company further argued that the benefits of oil exploitation accruing to the Ogoni outweigh any disadvantages.

In 1990, the Ogoni issued the Ogoni Bill of Rights (OBR) in which they articulated a number of demands, including political autonomy within Nigeria and right to use a fair amount of Ogoni oil revenue for Ogoni development, political control of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni people, adequate and direct representation as of right in all Nigerian national institutions, the use and development of Ogoni languages in all Nigerian territory, the full development of Ogoni culture, and the right to protect the Ogoni environment and ecology from further degradation.

They appealed to the international community for support. At about the same time, two filmmakers from the UK, Glen Ellis and Kay Bishop, met Saro-Wiwa on a visit to Nigeria, and the Ogoni case became part of the documentary film "The Heat of the Moment", which aired in the UK on Channel 4 in October 1992. Moreover, Ellis and Bishop introduced Saro-Wiwa to Friends of the Earth, Survival International and others in London.

The same year, Saro-Wiwa took his case to the Society of Threatened Peoples in Germany and then to the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations in Geneva. Through the facilitation of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), Saro-Wiwa addressed the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. Later that year, Saro-Wiwa persuaded Greenpeace to dispatch a team to observe the Ogoni protest march scheduled for 4 January 1993. They agreed to send a camera operator, and an official of the Rainforest Action Group, Shelley Braithwaite, agreed to witness the event.

On 4 January 1993, about 300,000 Ogoni converged to take part in an unprecedented protest march against the State and Shell Oil Company. The Ogoni articulated their grievances in terms of a lopsided federal structure, environmental degradation and destruction of local livelihoods by the activities of Shell. The success of the protest and the negative publicity generated about Shell's activities in Ogoni startled both the Nigerian state and the oil giant.

In April 1993, Wilbros, an American contractor to Shell, started bulldozing farmlands in Ogoni behind the shield of Nigerian soldiers. The Ogoni protested and the military opened fire on the demonstrators. The situation deteriorated as an Ogoni man was killed, some others sustained severe injuries and Wilbros equipment were vandalized. Shocked by MOSOP attack on Wilbros, and fearing that their clientelist tie to the government and Shell was at risk, ten traditional elders took a newspaper advertisement wherein they described the attack as an upsurge of lawless activities and demanded a military crackdown on MOSOP. Feeling betrayed, the youths turned on the elders, calling them 'vultures' and went about burning their homes and properties. The elders fled to Port Harcourt for government protection. Further cracks emerged in MOSOP when the organization decided to boycott the June 1993 presidential election. The boycott decision estranged the leaders who subsequently resigned from MOSOP.

The estranged elders convened a meeting at the palace of the Gbenemene (King) on 21 May 1994. Ogoni youths

allegedly invaded the palace and killed four prominent pro-government chiefs. The murder of the chiefs provided a pretext for military invasion and occupation of Ogoni. Saro-Wiwa and several activists were promptly arrested while others fled to exile. In November 1995, the State executed Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni leaders on trumped up charges of masterminding the murder of the four pro-government chiefs, sparking a groundswell of international outrage and condemnation (Maier 2000). Importantly, Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth of Nations, and the African Union, then Organization of African Unity) managed a half-hearted response (Matloff 1996); only the leaders of South Africa and Zimbabwe openly condemned the hanging of the Ogoni leaders.

The Ogoni grassroots communal mobilization and Boko Haram terrorist movement are employed here not because both groups are similar in terms of strategy, ideology and objectives. To the contrary, the point is to argue that targeted killings of leaders do not necessarily result in the decapitation of radical groups. The authors agree with Tamar Meisels (2009) on the need to distinguish between terrorism and political violence in general. That endeavour is, however, beyond the purview of the article.

Targeted killing

Do targeted killings of leaders of radical groups lead to the demise of the latter? Efforts to address the question remain inconclusive. Advocates of targeted killing of radical group leaders point to the weakening of Al-Qaeda terrorist organization following

the killing of Osama Bin Laden. The killing of several leaders of the terror group has, however, not stemmed the fear of possible terror attack in Europe and North America (Byman 2006). Moreover, al-Qaeda-linked groups have continued to operate in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Sahel. Thus, notwithstanding the relative success of the United States-led 'War on Terror', the value of targeted killing as a strategy for conflict resolution and peace-building remains controversial.

Apart from the United States, another country which has utilized targeted killing extensively is Israel. Byman (2006) contends that assessing whether Israeli targeted killings of Palestinian radical leaders have been effective is difficult. Part of the explanation for the problem is that terrorist groups organize retaliatory attacks when their leaders are killed. Israel mounted military strikes against the Hezbollah in the 1980s. The increased attack on Hezbollah leaders was followed by accelerated suicide attacks on Israel. Thus, critics of targeted killing emphasize that such action fuel anger and increase the number of terrorists (see Byman 2006).

Regarding the less-radical grassroots insurgency of the Ogoni people, Bob and Nepstad (2007), argue similarly that the killing of Saro-Wiwa, then president of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), led to the stumbling and fragmentation of MOSOP even after the return of democratic governance in 1999. Bob and Nepstad claim the movement was "crippled" and remains "a small political force in the Niger delta", given that its demands are "largely unmet" and has failed to regain its early vitality (Bob and

Nepstad, 2007). Similarly, Watts (2004:70), writing three years earlier, claims: "By the late 1990s moreover, as a movement it (MOSOP) had fallen apart", though spawning other indigenous groups, "MOSOP itself fell apart precisely as these other movements gained power."

These perspectives beg the question of how analysts conceptualize social movement. One can discern two different perspectives in the literature. The first sees social movements as interest organizations, which employ resources and seize opportunities, to secure a group's objectives (Tarrow 1998; 1996). The view is deservedly criticized for taking movements as observable or physical phenomena (Melucci 1996). The second perspective approaches social movements as cultural entities. Rather than an already existing phenomenon, a movement is seen as a process in formation; a system of ideas, knowledge, discourses and collective identities (Melucci, 1996; Eyerman, 1991). It is essentialist to construe a movement in either/or terms; a movement is both empirical and cultural.

Protest cycles draw attention to the cyclical rise and fall in social movement activities (Tarrow, 1994). Sidney Tarrow understands the political opportunity structure as determining such cyclical moments. An open political system provides incentives for actors to engage in collective action. When repression and violence replace political opportunity, the movement collapses. However, a movement is more than the empirical referent; it is partly cultural. As such, it is mistaken to imagine that repression will easily wipe out a movement. Thus, demobilization may not necessarily signal decline or disappearance

as the meaning and works of a movement may survive demobilization, providing a basis for future mobilizations (Anker, 2000). Leaders might die, but their ideas may continue to inspire collective resistance in scripts that may be open or hidden (Scott, 1990). If one argues that a movement is comatose just because it is hidden, then we might as well discount as insignificant the long processes of constructing a movement and its mythologies in sequestered places.

The Emergence of the MOSOP

The mid-1980s to the 1990s were momentous years in Nigeria. Authoritarian military regimes presided over an unpopular economic reforms programme, otherwise known as structural adjustment programme. Groups opposed to the economic and human rights records of the state were banned. Human rights activists, academics and journalist were arrested and detained and protesting students were sent home as universities closed down. The widely acclaimed winner of the 12 June 1993 presidential election, Chief Moshood Abiola, had his election nullified. Faced with death threats, the Nobel Prize Laureate in Literature, Wole Soyinka, fled Nigeria. In exile, he organized a clandestine radio station which broadcasts concentrated on the atrocities of the Abacha regime. Frontline independence leader, Chief Anthony Enahoro and other political luminaries and human rights activists fled the country even as security operatives assassinated or jailed others. The latter group included the former military Head of State and President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, and

his then second in command, Alhaji Shehu Musa Yar Adua, who later died in prison.

Through the prism of the political process theory, it was an inauspicious time. Yet, it was precisely within this climate of closed political opportunities that the MOSOP emerged, bursting into global public consciousness with the unprecedented protest of March 4th January 1993 in Ogoni. In the words of Saro-Wiwa;

The 4th of January was truly a liberation day: a day on which young and old, able and disabled, rich and poor, all of Ogoni came out to reassert themselves and to give notice that the nation had come of age and that it would not accept its destruction passively. We had surmounted the psychological barrier of fear. Ogoni would never be the same again (Saro-Wiwa, 1995:134).

The Ogoni struggle escalated in the early 1990s with the anti-Shell/State protests under the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP). The Ogoni successfully internationalized their cause, drawing various forms of support from international organizations (Boele, 1995). The success of the mobilization sent shock waves down the spine of both the state and Shell (UNPO, 1995; Saro-Wiwa, 1995). As suggested by Sidney Tarrow's (1996) theory of protest cycles, counter-movements mobilized against the MOSOP. The Nigerian state, under the Sani Abacha regime, reacted to Ogoni mobilization by deploying a discourse of criminality, and violence against the Ogoni. On its part, Shell embarked on a project of de-legitimizing Ogoni leadership,

whilst actively supporting the repression of the Ogoni.

Contingent events quickly heightened the pace of confrontations between the Ogoni and Shell locally. In the everyday routine of working her farm, Mrs. Korgbara came into confrontation with Wilbrosⁱ and soldiers on 28 April 1993. But she would not be intimidated by brute force or accept the destruction of her freshly planted farm. Her anger turned into protest, transforming in the process her farm into a site of struggle and for demonstrating the presence of injustice (Mustapha, 2005) even as she was physically assaulted.ⁱⁱ But a vast swathe of farmlands had already been bulldozed behind the cover of armed soldiers. The following day, ordinary women turned out in their numbers forming a human shield between their farms and the caterpillars. In the ensuing confrontation and vandalization of Wilbros equipment, the soldiers fired live bullets, wounding many, including Mrs. Korgbara who later had her arm amputated. Not done, on 3 May, soldiers shot and killed Mr. Agbarator Otu and wounded 20 others. The Rivers State Internal Security Task Force under Major Paul Okuntimo recommended a "wasting operation" within Ogoni because "Shell operations are still impossible unless ruthless military operations are undertaken for smooth economic activities to commence" (MOSOP, 2004: 28-29; UNPO, 1995).

Some Ogoni elites who wished to preserve their link with the state began to question and distance themselves from MOSOP. For instance, ten traditional elders took a newspaper advertisement wherein they described the attack on

Wilbros as an upsurge of lawless activities and demanded a military crackdown on MOSOP (McGreal, 1996). Feeling betrayed and disinherited by their supposed elders and leaders, the youths turned on the elders, calling them 'vultures' and went about burning their homes and properties. The latter fled from Ogoni land to 'exile' in Port Harcourt, capital city of Rivers State (McGreal, 1996). From that time, the youths lost patience and respect for the chiefs, regarding them as agents of Shell and the government, bent on sabotaging the Ogoni struggle. The intra-elite division widened with the collective decision to boycott the 1993 presidential elections. While moderate Ogoni elites including Garrick Leton and Edward Kobani (President and Vice-President of MOSOP respectively) wanted the Ogoni to participate in the election, Saro-Wiwa and others insisted on adhering to the decision of MOSOP. When the issue was put to a vote, the pro-election lobby lost by 6 votes to 11. Consequently, Leton and Kobani resigned their positions in MOSOP.

Notable Ogoni chiefs and elites gathered in the palace of the Gbenemene (clan head of Gokana) in Giokoo town on 21 May 1994 to plan a reception in honour of two Gokana men who had recently been given political appointment. In very controversial circumstances, four pro-government Ogoni chiefs, namely Edward Kobani, Albert Badey, Samuel Orage, and Theophilus Orage, were murdered. A special tribunal set up by the Head of State, General Sani Abacha, to try cases arising from the murder found Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni leaders guilty. They were accordingly sentenced to death. On

10th November 1995, the Ogoni nine (Ken Saro-Wiwa, John Kpuinen, Nubari Kiobel, Baribor Bera, Saturday Dorbe, Paul Levura, Felix Nwate, Nordu Eawo, and Daniel Gbokoo) were hanged, sparking a wave of international outrage and condemnation (Maier, 2000).

To neutralize the threat posed by MOSOP, Shell public affairs representatives appeared on major international media and national dailies in several countries, and visited to several foreign ministries (UNPO, 1995). The objective was to discredit the charge that Shell was environmentally irresponsible and delegitimize Saro-Wiwa as the authentic leader of all Ogoni. The Nigerian government initiated personal attacks against Saro-Wiwa and MOSOP on the diplomatic front. The Nigerian High Commission in London berated Saro-Wiwa for engaging in a crusade of violence and calumny for selfish reasons (UNPO, 1995). At the United Nations, Nigeria's former Permanent Representative to the UN, Ibrahim Gambari defended the General Sanni Abacha junta and its execution of Saro-Wiwa, and eight colleagues, calling them 'common criminals' (Walker 2008).

Methodology

The article relies both on secondary and primary sources. Primary sources include in-depth interviews with MOSOP activists who were selected randomly, and written accounts of Saro-Wiwa, then leader of MOSOP. Secondary sources include MOSOP's newspaper, written texts, and journal articles. The section on Boko Haram rests solely on secondary sources. Written accounts and internet sources

report the violent activities of Boko Haram, and they enable analysis of whether the group has weakened or strengthened following the killing of its leader. To access the contentious actions of MOSOP, the authors focus on events reported in the Ogoni Star, the official bi-weekly newspaper of MOSOP. To cross-check information in the newspaper, we assembled all the available MOSOP press releases and public statements. First, together with our informant, we searched for stored copies of Ogoni Star at the old MOSOP office along Aggrey road in Port Harcourt. The search effort yielded publications dating from 1999 to 2008. We could not locate some editions of the publication in a given month. Also, editions of the publication for some months of given years were missing. Secondly, we browsed through these documents with a view to extracting Ogoni contentious claims making. To be taken as protest event, an event had to meet three criteria: first, involves more than one person; second, occurs in public; and third, expresses a claim or grievance. Thus, protest event for the purpose at hand include petitions, marches, press releases, meetings, communiqués and/or violent activities. However, we exclude all claims made at seminars or conferences or workshops where other groups participated and also expressed their positions.

MOSOP after Saro-Wiwa: Courage under Shelling

“‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’ Where, O Death is your victory? Where, O Death is your sting?”

(1 Corinthians 15: 54-55, *New International Version*)

Following the death of the four chiefs, Ogoni land was militarized, and Ogoni people were subjected to military repression, beatings, and harassment by security forces. Journalists, scholars, and visitors were barred from entering Ogoni, placing it under effective siege. Yet, on 4th January 1996, thousands of Ogoni braved the odds to celebrate the annual Ogoni Day in defiance of the clampdown. The soldiers and Mobile Police reacted violently firing tear gas and live bullets in an abortive attempt to scuttle the event. Four Ogoni youths were killed as a result of the violent intervention (HRW, 1996).

In May 2005, MOSOP alleged that Major Obi, the then Head of the Rivers State Internal Security Task Force, had held secret meetings with some Ogoni chiefs who were forced to sign documents requesting Shell to return to Ogoni (MOSOP, 1996). Also, it alleges that Shell held meetings with groups, not affiliated with MOSOP, and the Internal Security Task Force where it signalled its intention to return to Ogoni. Lt. Col. Komo, then Military Administrator of the State, claimed in July that Shell would soon return to Ogoni (Isomkwo, 1996). In a press release, MOSOP accused Shell of divide-and-rule tactics and bribery (MOSOP, 1996). As the first anniversary of Saro-Wiwa’s death approached, Shell with the intention of removing the bite from the media publicity that would attend the memoriam invited and paid the way for a number of journalists to visit the Niger Delta. Major Obi warned all Ogoni chiefs

that he would not tolerate any gathering of more than two persons until December. The annual new yam festival at K-Dere slated for November was banned. In addition, the Rivers State Commissioner of Police announced that all public gatherings were banned and that offenders would be ruthlessly dealt with.

Despite the increased militarization and oppression of the occupying force, over 80, 000 Ogoni danced their anger again in celebration of the Ogoni Day on 4th January 1997. Four activists received gunshot wounds, 20 others were arrested, tortured and detained. In September 1998, the Ogoni-20, accused of offences on which Saro-Wiwa was hanged, were freed. One had died in detention and another one blinded as a result of torture and medical neglect. Notwithstanding the repression, and the flight into exile of their surviving leaders, MOSOP operatives went underground, keeping the movement alive and viable. According to Amanyie (2003), members of the National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP) undertook a tour of Ogoni, following the hanging of the Ogoni 9, to encourage MOSOP members and sustain commitment to the organization. While in detention, Saro-Wiwa usually communicated with the grassroots through NYCOP. Beyond that NYCOP showed undying courage when some of its members gallantly appeared at the Special Tribunal to bear witness for Saro-Wiwa.

Moreover, NYCOP members sacrificially made monthly financial contributions to facilitate the tour of Ogoni. Although, these activists could not have succeeded without the significant external support from well-meaning individuals and corporate actors,

it is important to highlight their leadership roles. Courage, firm belief, and determination in the face of possible death are the attributes of a leader. Activists were clearly and constantly on the path of danger. Yet, they took risks in an attempt to sustain the movement. How could they have attained such level of commitment given the death of their leaders? An Ogoni activist surmises that it was not natural; some force that he could not name must have generated the youths' commitment.ⁱⁱⁱ

The underground MOSOP performed in very difficult and dangerous circumstances three critical functions. First, they serve to give hope to the grassroots by undermining the propaganda of the state. In other words, the communication void created by repression, which could have isolated and left the movement in disarray was filled by underground MOSOP. Secondly, they provided hope and reassurances to MOSOP abroad and their allies that despite the repression, MOSOP was still alive. They did so by providing timely and detailed information regarding events in Ogoni. It was on the basis of such information that international bodies and actors continued to mount pressure on Shell and the state. Thirdly, by their action, they left little respite for both the State and Shell who continued to seek ways to undermine the resistance.

Is MOSOP Dead?

MOSOP's Contentious Repertoires, 1999-2008

What exactly did MOSOP do at the height of overt contention that it has been unable to repeat since after the death of

Saro-Wiwa? Put differently, where does the post-Saro-Wiwa MOSOP break ranks with the MOSOP of Saro-Wiwa era? There is evidence that MOSOP has not shied away from the contentious repertoire it deployed before the execution of Saro-Wiwa. Such repertoire of mobilization includes press releases and public protests. Similarly,

evidence (see table 1) suggests that Ogoni contentious repertoire has grown to include as targets relevant actors that emerged in the post-Saro-Wiwa era, notably, the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), and Rev. Father Matthew Kukah who was appointed by the central government to mediate between the Ogoni and Shell.

Table 1: Ogoni Contentious Action, 1999-2008

No	Event	Object of Action	Goal	Strategy	Year
1.	Press statement	The public and Shell	Reiterate Shell remains persona non grata in Ogoni	Public statement	10/11-24,1999
2.	Conferment of honors on Gordon/Anita Roddicks	Body Shop	Appreciation and to sustain support	Initiation into Ogoni societies	10/11-24, 1999
3.	Press statement	Police Commissioner/Shell	Warning to avert crisis	Appeal	10/11-24, 1999
4.	Press release	Minister of Justice	Clear the names of Ogoni 9 and compensation	Appeal	10/11-24, 1999
5.	Protest Action	Shell contractor	Prevent road construction	Physical blockade	4/17-21,2000
6.	Ogoni Congress	Internal consultation	Debunk claims of inviting Shell to Ogoni	Collective decision-making	4/17-21,2000
7.	Protest letter to Shell International	SPDC and Shell contractors	Warning against Shell's tactics to reenter Ogoni	Public statement	4/17-21,2000
8.	Press release	National Assembly	To make new laws against oil spills	Petition	10/9-22, 2000
9.	Petitions against Human rights abuse	Justice Oputa Panel	Participate in the government's reconciliation process	Petitions	10/9-22, 2000
10.	"Ogoni 9" 5 th anniversary	Ogoni and the public	Renew Ogoni commitment and show same to public	Fasting, prayers, lectures, solidarity messages	10/9-22, 2000

11.	Memoriam for Saro-Wiwa	Ogoni	Uniting all Ogoni	Prayers, messages, hymns	11/26-12/9, 2001
12.	Submission before Legislature	Lawmakers	Insist on non-entry of Shell and appointment of another oil coy	Appeal	4/13-27, 02
13.	Advertorial	Niger delta communities	Sensitization on rights of objection to Shell pipeline	Information on how communities can confront Shell	6/2-15, 2003
14.	Special Congress	Ogoni	Electing credible leaders	Political aspirants to address Ogoni	02/11-24, 2003
15.	Ogoni Day	Ogoni and public	Affirm commitment to OBR	Speeches, reiterate demands, remember heroes	01/20-02/3, 2003
16.	50 th anniversary of Birabi	Ogoni	Push salience of nationalist icon and emphasize sacrifice for Ogoni above private interests	Speeches, church service	01/20-02/3, 2003
17.	Protest letter	Shell	To put out fire and stop spill	appeal	03/14-27, 2003
18.	Ogoni Day	Ogoni	Affirm commitment to OBR and remember heroes	Speeches, cultural displays, messages	01/12-25, 2004
19.	Statement	Shell	Call on Shell to undertake radical reform	Appeal	03/8-21, 2004
20	MOSOP meets with Obasanjo	Government	Niger Delta problems and how Shell can reenter Ogoni	Discussion	11/3-17, 2004
21.	National congress	Ogoni	The release of human right commission report	Appeal	11/3-17, 2004
22.	Ogoni Day	Ogoni	Affirm commitment to OBR and remember heroes	Speeches, cultural displays, messages	01/2005
23	Press release	Shell	Flays Shell's planned incursion in Ogoni	Public statement	09/3-17, 2005
24.	10 th anniversary of Ogoni heroes	Ogoni	Mobilize commitment	Cultural activities	11/28-12/11, 2005

25.	Green Walk	Shell and Government	Highlight damage of oil companies to man and environment	Peaceful protest	11/10, 2005
26.	Statement	Shell	Expose Shell's lies	Counter-discourse and release of Shell's sworn affidavit to reenter Ogoni	10/9-22, 2005
27.	Letter	Shell	Warning to stay away from Ogoni	Threat of dire consequences	04/14-28, 2006
28.	Statement	Shell and government	That Shell cannot re-enter Ogoni because of on-going process of reconciliation	Public warning in reaction to government statement	07/5-18, 2006
29.	Monument to immortalize Ogoni martyrs	Ogoni	Memoriam and reconciliation	Memoriam to Ogoni 13	05/26-06/9, 2006
30.	World Indigenous Day	Oil-bearing communities	To mobilize and work together	Seminars, lectures	09/18-10/2, 2006
31.	National congress	Shell	To vote against Shell's return	Collective decision-making	09/18-10/2, 2006
32.	MOSOP backs out of Reconciliation process	Shell, Government	Insists on integrity of OBR	Pointing out insincerity of the process	10/30-11/12, 2006
33.	Briefing note on reconciliation process	Public	To sensitize the public to government and Shell's insincerity	Publication	10/30-11/12, 2006
34.	Letter	Shell International and UNEP	Advise to act wisely to avert crisis	Public statement	10/30-11/12, 2006
35.	Ogoni Day	Ogoni	Affirm commitment to OBR and remember heroes	Speeches, cultural displays, messages	01/19-02/1, 2007
36.	Ogoni Receives Obasanjo	Obasanjo	Asks government to reallocate Ogoni oil blocks to another oil company	Address to welcome Obasanjo	05/26-06/8, 2007
37.	Press release	Obasanjo	Debunk Obasanjo's claim that MOSOP is obstacle to peace	Public statement	05/26-06/8, 2007
38.	Press	Kukah	Debunks Kukah's statement that	Public statement	08/1-14, 2007

	statement		MOSOP cannot speak for Ogoni		
39.	Ultimatum	Shell and agents	End incursion in Ogoni	Warn of mass action	11/26-12/9, 2007
40.	Candlelight Procession	Ogoni, Shell and government	12 th Anniversary of Saro-Wiwa and others	Street procession, placards, and green leaves	11/26-12/9, 2007
41.	Petition	Senate	Against security vote	Appeal	12/19-31, 2007
42.	Public march	Shell	Protest Shell's unauthorized entry into Ogoni	Protest and speeches	12/19-31, 2007
43.	Ogoni Day	Ogoni	Affirm commitment to OBR and remember heroes	Speeches, cultural displays, messages	01/18-31, 2008
44.	Press statement	Joint Task Force	Debunks JTF's label of "militancy"	Discourse	02/11-24, 2008
45.	Mass protest	Shell	To stop Shell's activities in K-Dere	Physical action	03/21-04/3, 2008
46.	Women protest	Shell and government	Stop Shell's activities in Kegbara	Peaceful, songs, green leaves	03/21-04/3, 2008
47.	National congress	Ogoni and Shell	Collective decision on Ogoni response to shell	Condemnation of Shell	03/21-04/3, 2008
48.	Visit to Rivers state governor	Government	To ascertain whether the government asked Shell to enter Ogoni as latter claims	Consultation and dialogue	03/21-04/3, 2008

Source: Derived from Ogoni publications

As is evident in the table, however, Ogoni protest repertoires were directed variously at the government, Shell, UNEP, other actors, and even to itself as a strategy to

buoying up internal commitment to the social movement organization. A breakdown of the protest events shows the following:

Table 2: Protest events and targets

Targets	Government	Shell	Rev. Kukah	Others	Total
Protest events	23	13	8	7	51

Although action targeted the state twenty three times in a universe of fifty one events, it should be noted that many of the times, events that target the state simultaneously target Shell. In other words, it was in very few circumstances that protest event making claims on the state failed to make reference to Shell. Moreover, it is remarkable that the Ogoni targeted the State almost twice as much as it did Shell.

Has the killing of Saro-Wiwa led to the death of his ideas? Events since 1995 have affirmed Saro-Wiwa's prediction that his ideas will live on. The Ogoni have continued the struggle. In death, Saro-Wiwa continues to provide them inspiration for the struggle. Mrs. Roseline Nwigani, a secondary school teacher, an Ogoni activist and former leader of Federation of Ogoni Women's Associations (FOWA) confidently proclaimed her faith, "I know that one day God will wipe away our tears. We will be liberated one day. All we have done cannot go down the drain." Similarly, Charity Deekae Dickson, an Ogoni activist and businesswoman, is convinced that Ogoni is fighting a just cause for which she is ready to continue to make sacrifices. She believes that God has a reason for all that has befallen the Ogoni and in the near future they would achieve all their goals. Thus, the Ogoni remain resolutely committed to the cause, and hopeful that

the vision, even though it tarries, shall come to pass. In a personal interview, Mitee (2008) argues;

When you kill a leader, his spirit enters into everyone who bought his ideas and such ideas spread quickly. That was what happened when they killed Ken Saro-Wiwa. Every Ogoni person became a pocket Ken. We (members of MOSOP) were willing to take risks to continue his work. So, wherever they fled, the Ogoni spread the story. I do not know whether there was a spirit in that struggle. It was like the Spirit of Pentecost. As people were repressed they fled to the farms and forests to pray.

Twenty other Ogoni activists were interviewed on the question of whether MOSOP was dead. The respondents disagreed with the view that MOSOP was moribund. Sample of respondents' articulations are presented as follows.

Young Kigbara (Programme Officer, Environment and Sustainable Development)

MOSOP dead? MOSOP is very much alive. We have refused to act violently in the face of provocations; hence people think we are dead. The time we are in is different from the early 1990s. Then we needed campaigns to announce our emergence. We have done that and the world has heard.

Our demand is not to exit Nigeria but to engage the state in a discourse to achieve the Ogoni Bill of Rights. The dialogue option we have chosen is a way to achieve our objectives. Because we do not carry guns and daggers people think we are dead. When dialogue is insincere, we will pull out of it, and that is what we have done. We have said we do not want Shell in Ogoni ever. In the early 1990s, the state was draconian and repressive. But now we have a democratic government, which claims to be open and dialogic. So, our engagement is now at an intellectual level. The president of MOSOP, Mitee, inherited a number of crises, but he has been able to manage the situation and keep MOSOP together. Today, MOSOP is recognized by the government.

Similarly, Wilfred M. Tanee (Leader of MOSOP, Oguere Chapter, Baabe Kingdom) would not entertain the idea of the movement's death. According to him,

The struggle dead? (He laughs). No, it is not dead. Demonstrations do not take place everyday, but only when the need arises. Since the machineries of oppression and degradation are still functioning, we cannot die. We are in this struggle for the truth. I am forever committed to the struggle because our demands are legitimate. And like our leaders said, since Ogoni blood was shed, the struggle can not be abandoned. The struggle has changed me. Our objectives are realizable because we are still focused and we are not stopping until we get there. By

the grace of God it will be actualized. I believe strongly.

Baria-ra Kpalap (Information Officer, MOSOP Secretariat) contextualizes MOSOP in terms of regime types, arguing that MOSOP has changed strategy in line with prevailing circumstances and not necessarily because it has dwindled.

To say the movement is no longer vibrant is myopic. At the time of Ken, conditions were different from what they are now. Then, there was need to mobilize, given the dictatorial and insensitive military regimes of Generals Babangida and Abacha. Everyone, including international bodies and foreign governments, wanted Abacha out of government. But now, under a democratic dispensation, these same actors want democracy to thrive in Nigeria. So they urge us to give democracy a chance. Therefore, we have changed our strategy to align with the present condition of things in the country. We do not need to sensitize anybody anymore as the whole world is aware of our case.

In a similar vein, Chujor (Former National Vice-President of NYCOP) appealed to some of the achievements of MOSOP to argue that the movement remains vibrant,

MOSOP has achieved a lot. But ordinary people would not see anything. Awareness and understanding was created in the people. Today, the president of UNPO is an Ogoni. During the presidency of Obasanjo, an Ogoni was Economic Adviser. We are known and proud. We have learned how to manage our own internal differences and conflicts. We have stopped Shell

and consistently repudiated their subterranean moves to re-enter. They have tried severally, but failed and will continue to fail. Our struggle is very much alive. Because money is not being shared some may be tempted to think nothing is happening.

If the Ogoni movement is still on course as these activists claim, why do some analysts see it otherwise? Probable reasons have been adduced by the activists themselves. Such explanations may include the lack of money to share, the step-back from international mobilization, and the absence of earth-shaking demonstrations in Ogoni and Port-Harcourt. Bob and Nepstad (2007), and Watts (2004) would suggest that effective state repression, which drove MOSOP underground, derailed and decapitated the movement. To Bob and Nepstad, an additional explanation for the demise of MOSOP relates to the movement's failure to achieve its set goals. They claim that to infer the impact of a leader on a movement, we should look at the "sharp and sustained changes in a movement after a leader's murder", as such "provide evidence of the effects of this event" (Bob and Nestad, 2007:1372). However, it is important to be reminded that a movement is in flux just as its internal and external contexts. Movements adapt to policy changes, repression, organizational viability, new strategies, and new challenges. To despise these variables and locate changes in MOSOP solely on the death of its leader is simply misleading. According to Mitee,

Aspects of MOSOP metamorphosed; not dwindled. Because Shell is no

longer operating in Ogoni, we are not visible anymore. The tools we used initially are not useful for today. Moreover, MOSOP is trying to play the role of an NGO and to bring balkanized peoples together. This needs different tools (Mitee personal interview, 2008).

By the time Bob and Nepstad wrote, it would have been obvious to keen observers that MOSOP was on a rebound. But more importantly, field investigation would have shown anyone that there remains a corps of leaders, women, and youths who are as dedicated, committed and forceful as ever. Moreover, before revelling in the claim of collapse, they should have discovered a generation of young men and women who are as angry as their fathers, and who share a strong sense of identity with MOSOP. Such awareness is enough to suggest that these remnants can sustain a movement (see Jackson 1976:174).

Moreover, several mutually reinforcing factors explain the trajectory of MOSOP. Besides, we cannot arrive at any meaningful conclusion on the dynamics of the MOSOP without due attention to the effect of contingency on the trajectory of the movement. Scholars who diminish the effectuality of movements have ignored how unplanned events accentuate the sharp degree of contentiousness at some point and diminished contentiousness at another. In the case of the Ogoni, such contingency includes Wilbros decision to bulldoze freshly planted farmlands in Ogoni without prior consultation (UNPO, 1995). The intrusion resulted in deaths and serious magnitude of violence on both

sides. Neither MOSOP nor Saro-Wiwa planned or authorized that resistance. However, it became one of the few defining moments for the movement. Moreover, at the burial of Agbarator Otu, the first recorded Ogoni death, Ogoni leaders brought out the meaning of the link between the murder of Otu and the struggle by declaring that the struggle cannot ever be abandoned. Neither MOSOP nor Ogoni leaders planned or expected the slaying of Otu. They may not even have envisaged that events would deteriorate to a situation of irreversibility. Saro-Wiwa, thus, displayed sharp and uncommon intellect when he argues:

In any case, the battle was already joined, and we were probably no longer in control of whatever happened or was to happen. We were, from that day, largely reacting to what our opponents did, except for the decision to boycott the presidential elections of 12 June (Saro-Wiwa, 156).

Beside the failure to reckon with contingency is an unwillingness to grasp the extent to which the escalation of contentious action can be the result of the activities of the state, its police, and military forces. Thus, Brian Crozier points out that official error largely explain rebellion:

There are, in fact, two kinds. One covers sins of omission: the disregard of early warnings, the failure to take political action in time. The other covers sins of commission: actions that aggravate rather than improve a situation, policies that defer the day of reckoning, while merely ensuring that

the price to be paid will be higher than it need have been (Crozier, 1960:107).

The dismissive failure of the state and Shell regarding the OBR and ultimatum reflects official failure to take advantage of early warning signals. Denied hope, Ogoni were driven to a desperate course of action; internationalization of the struggle. Similarly, the social movement literature has shown that the specific action of the state's instrument of violence determines whether or not conflict escalates. The case of the Ogoni exemplifies the point of the argument. The continuing arrests and harassment of Saro-Wiwa in April 1993 elicited the ire of Ogoni youths who took to the streets of Port Harcourt on the 29th April the same year. It was the brazenness of security forces that led to the shooting of Otu and Korgbara. The pain and trauma these events had on the Ogoni psyche clearly explain while Ogoni resorted to the 30th April protest and vandalization of Wilbros equipment. Mitee, Kobani and Saro-Wiwa had to deploy to Ogoni to calm a traumatized people (Saro-Wiwa, 1995).

Bob and Nepstad (2007), and Watts (2004) have clearly discounted these dimensions of the conflict. Yet, such provocations in recent times have not been met with acquiescence. Attempts by Shell to re-enter Ogoni behind the shield of fierce-looking thugs, hired from within and outside Ogoni, and members of the dreaded Joint Task Force, have elicited protests at different locations in Ogoni. In these protests, Ogoni activists have been subjected to beatings and arrests. It was within such context that MOSOP's Steering Committee met on 11th March 2008 to

decide on what actions to adopt as counter-measure against Shell and their security allies. In preparation for a mass show-down, MOSOP alerted the public to Shell's unauthorized activities in Ogoni. In its reaction, however, Shell publicly claimed that the Rivers State government actually authorized the re-entry to enable it carry out repairs. Ogoni leaders then visited the state governor to confirm Shell's claim. In a two-page public rebuttal the government, in unequivocal terms, states:

At no time, did the Rivers State Government direct SPDC to resume operations in Ogoniland. On the contrary, we have as a responsible and impartial government committed to the economic prosperity of the nation offered to assist in helping to end the disagreement between the company and the Ogoni people which have dragged for so long. This cannot translate to a unilateral order to the SPDC on our part, and without any reference to the Federal Government which oversees oil matters, to recommence operation in Ogoniland, especially when areas of differences between the Ogoni people and the company have not been fully resolved...But our position remains that all stakeholders in the oil industry who are operating under Nigeria's evolving democracy, and on Rivers soil must learn to allow room for painstaking negotiations which are a function of broad-based and sincere talks that are designed to facilitate the resolution of conflicts which threaten the economic well being of our great country Nigeria and the peace and

security of either our state or that of the region (Nweke, 2008).

The disclaimer, coupled with the mobilizing activities of women, Kingdom chapters of MOSOP compelled Shell to abandon the idea of muzzling its way back into Ogoni.

Islamic Movements

In December 1980, large-scale rioting in Kano City led to the death of 1000 to 10,000 people as the Islamic sect, Maitatsine, led by Muhammadu Marwa Mai-tatsine fought pitched battles with Nigerian police and army. The stated aims of the sect were to contend against materialism and privilege and to purify Islamic practice. The sect has been supported by refugees from Chad and Niger, as well as by recent rural migrants to Kano City. The police and army put down the rioting with great violence, and it may have been that the perception of the sect as heretical led to the lack of restraint by the army and police. Marwa was killed in the 1980 fighting in Kano City (Aghedo and Osumah, 2012). Further outbreaks of violence in which the sect was involved occurred in Maiduguri and Kaduna in 1982 and then in Yola in early 1984. Explanations abound for the rise of the sect, its violence, and its challenge to the legitimacy of secular and established Islamic authorities. Some observers call attention to the general Islamic revival expressed through a variety of institutional and social movements that, although they are diverse in terms of origins, recruitment, and ideology, share a common commitment to moral and

political reforms and express outrage against corruption in state and society (Rogers, 2012).

Michael Watts (1984) sees the Yan Tatsine as a movement that attacks the materialism and inequality that accompanied the petroleum boom in Nigeria. Marwa, however, had been preaching against all materialism and modernity well before Nigeria's oil boom. Watts argues that it is likely that the number of Marwa's recruits increased as a result of the large dislocations that took place then in and around the great cities of the north. Migration to Kano and Kaduna swelled in the 1970s, and inequality intensified. The numbers of displaced and wandering Koranic students (*garda*) grew, and these wanderers, once accorded status in the society, now were perceived by better-off elements as a threatening lumpen proletariat. For the Yan Tatsine, as for earlier Islamic political movements, Islamic norms and culture do provided the values and lens through which the ordinary Muslims evaluated society, wealth, government performance, and legitimacy. Thus Watts (2004) argues that Islamic populism breeds formidable opportunities for resisting co-optation in Nigeria where the state is seen as partially legitimate in regard to the Muslim community.

In 2002, Muslim cleric Mohammed Yusuf formed Boko Haram in Maiduguri, capital city of Borno State, located in the northeast of Nigeria. In July 2009, Boko Haram members refused to follow a motor-bike helmet law, leading to heavy-handed police tactics that set off an armed uprising in the northern state of Bauchi

and spread into the states of Borno, Yobe, and Kano. The Boko Haram uprising was, however, crushed by the military in July 2009. In the wake of the military crackdown over 800 persons, mostly sect members had been killed. The radical sect leader, Yusuf, and some members of the sect, including Yusuf's father-in-law, Alhaji Baba Fugu, were arrested and later summarily executed in police custody. Beginning from January 2010, aggrieved surviving members of the sect regrouped and mounted methodical terror attacks against given targets, including innocent civilians, churches, banks, security agencies, political leaders, the United Nations House and the national Police Headquarters, in Abuja (Aghedo and Osumah, 2012).

Popularly called Boko Haram which literally translates into "Western education is sin" in Hausa language, the radical sect calls itself *Jama'atul Alhul Sunnah Lidda'wati wal jihad*, or "people committed to the propagation of the prophet's teachings and jihad." Yusuf was a disciple of the salafist school of thought, which is associated with jihad, and was influenced by Ibn Taymiyyah, a fourteenth century legal scholar who is considered a "major theorist" for radical groups in the Middle East. Boko Haram's stated objective is establishment of a fully Islamic state in Nigeria, including the implementation of criminal sharia courts across the country. The rise of Boko Haram signifies the ripening of extremist impulses deep-rooted in the cultural imaginary of northern Nigeria. But the group itself is an effect, and not a cause, of

decades of failed government and elite rapacity, unfolding into violence.

The summary execution of Yusuf and other sect members in police custody bears the mark of the belief that a movement can be emasculated by killing its leader. The killing of Yusuf, contrary to such belief has led to the radicalization of the group. Boko Haram has since Yusuf's demise claimed responsibility for a series of high-profile suicide attacks and bomb explosions across the country. The sect began its offensive by launching attacks against public buildings and police stations on 24 December 2003 in Yobe state. In a spectacular but deadly move, the sect launched a devastating suicide attack against the United Nations (UN) building in Abuja. That singular offensive claimed the lives of 21 persons, including several UN staff while 73 others sustained various degrees of injuries. Earlier, the Inspector-

General (IG) of the Nigerian Police narrowly escaped death when a suicide bomber trailed the IG's convoy to the police headquarters and detonated his bomb. Indiscriminate attacks have been launched against churches, local bars, bank, security buildings and personnel and newspaper houses. Human Rights Watch estimates that over 935 persons have been killed since 2009 in Boko Haram-related attacks. In 2009, 250 persons were killed. The casualty figure more than doubled in 2011 as the casualty figure rose to 550 in 115 separate events. Boko Haram's deadliest single operation so far occurred on 20 January 2012 when bomb attacks targeting mainly security formations in Kano state killed a total of 185 policemen and residents. The table below summarises some of the violent attacks perpetrated by members of Boko Haram.

Table 3: Some Attacks carried out by Boko Haram

Date	Event
2009	Mohammed Yusuf captured by the army, and later summarily executed
September 2010	Surviving members of Boko Haram freed hundreds of prisoners from Maiduguri prison
September 2010	Bauch prison attacked, and 721 prisoners escape
December 2010	Bomb explosion in Jos, leading to the death of 80 persons
December 2010	New year's eve attack on Abuja barracks
2010-2011	Dozens are killed in Maiduguri shootings
June 2011	Police Headquarters in Abuja bombed
August 2011	UN Headquarters in Abuja bombed
August 2011	Prominent Muslim cleric, Lima Bana, killed
December 2011	Christmas bombing of St. Theresa's Church, Madalla, Abuja
January 2012	Over 200 killed in Kano attacks
February 2012	35 killed in attacks on Church of Christ in Nigeria, Jos
February 2012	Suicide bombing of army headquarters in Kaduna

April 2012	11 killed in attacks in Taraba state
June 2012	Bauchi Church bombed
June 2012	Attacks on Kaduna and Zaria Churches
July 2012	60 killed in Jos funeral Church service
August 2012	6 soldiers killed in suicide bombing, Damaturu, Yobe State

Source: Excerpted from Obadiah Mailafia (2013)

In the case of the Ogoni, Mitee argues that MOSOP has been successful, though not one hundred per cent, because MOSOP achieved what it set out to do initially: drive away Shell from Ogoni. According to him, other goals such as environmental clean-up and compensation are additions. As a result of the exit of Shell and the consequent stoppage to gas flaring, agricultural productivity is on the rebound in Ogoni, and wildlife is beginning to teem again. Mitee argues further that some of the successes of MOSOP include creating and raising the political consciousness of the Ogoni people, and thereby empowering them to assert themselves as equal citizens of Nigeria. Moreover, the struggle of the Ogoni has contributed to the increased federal allocation to the Niger Delta.

Conclusion

Leadership assassination is a notable tool that some states, notably the United States of America and Israel, have deployed against terrorist groups. Advocates of leadership assassination point at evidence, which shows that elimination of leaders, do have profound impact on the viability and survival of radical groups. For instance, they argue that the killing of Osama Bin Laden has weakened Al Qaeda. Critics, however,

suggest that the killing of leaders do not necessarily bring about peace. They show that the killing of leaders in some cases lead to organizational restructuring, anger and upsurge in terrorist violence.

Some analysts have argued that the killing of Saro-Wiwa had profound impact on the MOSOP. To the scholars, MOSOP dwindled, fragmented and remains comatose because Saro-Wiwa was killed. However, the processes of fragmentation predated the killing of Saro-Wiwa. Moreover, there is evidence that MOSOP has not shied away from the contentious repertoire deployed before the killing of Saro-Wiwa. Ogoni action repertoire increased after the death of Saro-Wiwa to include new actors, such as Rev. Father Kukah and the UNDP. Indeed, despite the elimination of its leader, MOSOP has remained resolutely opposed to the re-entry of Shell into Ogoni. Attempts by both the state and Shell to organize such re-entry met with staunch resistance from the Ogoni. It is difficult to imagine how a floundering movement can remain resolute and committed to its founding objective and vision.

In a manner that reflect the view that killing a leader kills a movement, security agents summarily executed the leader of Boko Haram, Mohammed Yusuf, following the latter's arrest. Rather than stymie and become comatose, surviving members of

Boko became radicalized and have since deployed violent episodes against state, civilian, national and international targets. Concerted military attempts to rein in the terrorist group have so far failed miserably. Boko Haram still manages to visit violence on targets despite heavy military presence in the northeast of the country.

Both the Ogoni and Boko Haram cases provide evidence that leadership

assassination does not necessarily lead to movement demise. The Ogoni shows that members of a movement may still remain committed to the vision and objective of the group, and actually take steps to sustain them when the need arises. The Boko Haram case underlines that following the death of a leader; a movement can radicalize, reorganize and deploy violence in ways and at levels that the deceased leader may not have contemplated.

ⁱ Wilbros was an American oil servicing firm to Shell.

ⁱⁱ Personal interview with Mrs. Korgbara, 2002.

ⁱⁱⁱ Personal interview with Bari-ara, Kpalap, 2007 and 2008.

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