

# SHIFTING THE CENTRE OF GRAVITY: THE KAIAMA DECLARATION, CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS AND THE NIGERIAN STATE

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper interrogated Civil-Military Relations in Bayelsa State, Nigeria, on the premise of the Kaiama Declaration as a historical guide, reflecting the dynamics of Self-Determination engagements and its effects on Civil-Military Relations. The paper argued that while the Nigerian state had enjoyed the longest stretch of democratic rule with the birth of the Fourth Republic in 1999, civil-military relations has largely been tensed and frosty at the individual level, hence the need for a shift of the centre of gravity from a state-centric approach to a people-centric approach. The study however adopted the historical method of research, relying on primary and secondary sources of data collection for analysis as well as employed the theoretical frameworks of Peter D. Feaver's Agency Theory and Johan Galtung's Structural Violence Theory to digest the dynamics of the relationships.*

**Keywords:** *Nigerian State, Bayelsa State, Kaiama Declaration, Civil-Military Relations, Militarisation.*

## 1. Introduction

Democracy as a system of governance is traceable to the ancient Greek city-states' political system. It has since received acceptance and modifications globally, arguably placing it as the preferred form of government. However, like other forms of governmental systems, it has its fair share of challenges. The main character of these challenges is the place of the military. The military as it is today is a distinct profession equipped and empowered to protect the state from external threat or aggression. However, the military had been embroiled in other security functions such as Internal Security Operations (ISOs) and its relationship with the civilian population had become increasingly complex in contemporary times. Gani Yoroms had rightly observed that the political and socio-economic structures put in place for social order would be seriously contested without the security component. In addition, unlike the civil society, the military had over the years become a specialized instrument for state coercion through its command chain, on a daily basis relates with civil populations at varying levels. This understanding had informed the definition of civil-military relations as "The web of relations between the military and the society within which it operates, and of which it is necessarily a part. Such relations encompass all aspects of the role of the military (as a professional,

political, social and economic institution) in the entire gambit of national life. Civil military relations involve issues of the attitude of the military towards the civilian society, the civilian society's perception of, and attitudes to the military, and the role of the armed forces in relation to the state."

Civil-Military Relations in its simplest meaning is the interaction (in all forms and levels) between the armed forces and the civil society. This relation is expressed in formal and informal settings at the institutional and individual level respectively. For Nigeria, like all other nascent democracies, especially within the African clime, the focus of the state is majored on how the state can control the military institution and prevent same from usurping power from civilian authorities. This relationship is referred to as the "center of gravity of civil-military relations."<sup>3</sup> While the centre of gravity of civil-military seems to have some level of sanity in Nigeria following over two decades of uninterrupted democratic experience from 1999, its rear is antithetical to it.

Bayelsa State presents a unique situation as the state is overly militarised with the presence of men in military uniforms at literally every turn. This is particularly so because of the resolve of the Nigerian state to ensure unencumbered oil exploration and exploitation activities in the oil-rich Niger Delta state. Bayelsa State, created on 1st

October, 1996 from what is now referred as Old Rivers State has the largest concentration of the Ijos, a people with historical antecedent of struggle against marginalization and oppression of varying categories from pre-colonial to the independence era, chiefly owing to her strategic geographic position and her huge oil and gas deposits.

## 2. The Problem

Historically, the Niger Delta had remained a hotbed owing to her strategic position<sup>4</sup> in Nigeria's oil and gas industry. Bayelsa State like most of the Niger Delta states had over the years experienced undue militarisation owing to her natural endowments. This is a direct consequence of the Nigerian state's position to ensure uninterrupted exploration and exploitation of oil and gas resources from the bowels of the Niger Delta and the response from protest movements or groups aimed at resource control or at worst to ensure better living condition for the peoples of the region. This position of the Nigerian state and by extension, her agents – the Military and Multinational Corporations had occasioned a scenario where military's professional code of conduct reflecting self-restraint, humanity, solidarity, dignity, and the overall respect for civil authority and rule of law had become elusive, especially in relation with "ordinary Nigerians", democratic practice notwithstanding.

For Bayelsa State and by extension the Ijoland, the Kaiama Declaration by Ijo youths at Kaiama, Bayelsa State on the 11th of December, 1998 ushered in a 'revised' confrontational approach to the Niger Delta Question. This arguably became a pretext for the increased deployment of military personnel from their primary responsibility to secondary roles such as Internal Security Operations (ISOs) following the frailties of the Nigerian Police Force and other sister agencies to mitigate the emerging security threats within the region and the state of Bayelsa in particular. Expectedly, this birthed an uneasy peace with the proliferation of military bases, quarters and checkpoints, militant groups and camps. The overarching effects of this configuration on the everyday life of the people, ranging from kidnapping, pipeline vandalisation, protests, psychological traumatization to physical assaults of civilians by military personnel cannot be overemphasized.

Military colours had decorated the physical landscape of the state and had remained so even at the dousing of tension in the state following the introduction and implementation of the Amnesty Programme in 2009. The relation between these two divides had remained largely unsettled and

antagonistic producing an unhealthy community even within the context of the current democratic experiment that had endured for over two decades bringing to question the place of democracy in ensuring a harmonious civil-military experience, albeit at the individual level where the signs and symptoms of the "bloody civilian" image is still prevalent. Hence, this study sets to take a departure from the institutional perspective – a state-centric approach, which is burdened by issues of military subservient to civilian authorities to the individual viewpoint of civil-military relations, which borders on the day-to-day interactions of military personnel and their civilian counterparts.

## 3. Conceptual Review

Research works are never done in isolation of others. It is therefore important to take an x-ray of selected scholarly works with relevance to this study. They are discussed thematically below in two groups – Bayelsa State and the Niger Delta, and Democracy and the Military.

### Bayelsa State and the Niger Delta

Conceptualizing Bayelsa State and the Niger Delta involves understanding the geography and its people. The Niger Delta is located at the southernmost part of Nigeria. It is the delta area of the River Niger with large deposit of natural resources, especially oil (the black gold). However, the region had suffered a problem of definition as to what area actually make up the Niger Delta and a paradox of some sort – having so much, yet so little. Hence, there had become two major criteria: geography and oil politics. Indeed, petroleum and gas has become critical to the Nigerian state that these resources had become a criterion for being mapped part of the Niger Delta. Ebiegberi Alagoa's work<sup>5</sup> noted that the geographical Niger Delta, which constitutes Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta States, had been expanded to include all other neighbouring states in which petroleum oil and gas are produced. Alagoa examines the place of the Ijos and the Niger Delta in the historical trajectory of Nigeria. It stresses the fact that petroleum, which is in abundance within the region, had remained the economic mainstay of the country. This inadvertently explains the rationale behind the federal government's policies, including the deployment of huge military presence in Ijo land to ensure the protection of state's interests in the oil and gas industry, with little or no regard to the people's welfare, especially as it affects their means of livelihood (majorly fishing and farming). The examples of Williams Dappa Pepple of Bonny, Nana Olomu of Itsekiri, King Jaja of Opobo, King Fredrick William Koko of Nembe, Ken Saro Wiwa of

Ogoniland and Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro of the Ijos are instructive to better grasp the resolve of government to the use of raw power and the region's resolve to resist all forms of oppression.

This had left the inhabitants of the region (Bayelsa State inclusive) with accumulated pain and grievances against the state and her establishments (the military as a chief agent of the state) from colonial times to date. It is worthy of note, that the Niger Delta is predominantly Ijo with Bayelsa State having the largest concentration of Ijo communities closely followed by Rivers and Delta States.<sup>6</sup> The current militarisation of Bayelsa State can be traced to the Kaiama Declaration, which ushered in the militant phase to the Niger Delta Question in Bayelsa State taken its root from the Boro's landmark Twelve-Day Revolution of 1966. Scholars noted that Boro's failure to bring positive change to the region through the instrumentality of his Rebellion is what had snowballed in to "the formation of the Ijo (Ijaw) Youth Council (IYC), made up of Ijo militant groups with the aim of fighting for justice and equity, thus continuing from where Boro stopped."<sup>7</sup> This account maintained that the organization of the Egbesu Boys, the militant wing of the IYC and their subsequent engagement with the Nigerian state in arms (manifesting in hostage taking, disruption of oil operations amongst others) despite suffering heavy casualties, including the Odi Massacre of 1999 made a significant impact in projecting the demands of the people.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the Kaiama Declaration became the identity and livewire of the Ijos and the compass for their struggle towards self-determination and resource control. Whilst it was not a declaration of war, <sup>9</sup> as evident in Article 10, however, it became a warning sign, <sup>10</sup> and it is this sign that propelled the Nigerian state to deploy heavy military presence to the state to forestall the IYC's Operation Climate Change.

### **Democracy, the Military and Civil-Military Relations**

The beauty of democracy is its principle of power being resident in the hands of the people. It is this understanding that informed one of America's finest Presidents, Abraham Lincoln's submission that Democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people. Suffice it to add that any democratic government short of this is synonymous to democracy in theory and not in practice. For Nigeria, its second birth at independence in 1960 came with a lot of hope with the founding fathers pledging their allegiance to Nigeria's development and democratic process. However, this promise and people's hope barely saw the light of day with the military sojourn into the reins of political power on 15th January, 1966, uprooting the seedlings of

democracy. Adewale Ademoyega observed that the military became an Army of occupation, indulging in political reaction, economic robbery, corruption and sabotage and became an instrument of force, arson, looting, pogrom, brigandage and coercion. Hence, widening the divide instead of building a strong synergy with the people.

A people-centric approach to Civil-Military Relations syncs with Samuel Huntington's subjective control model in civil-military relations, where the military is an integral part of the socio-political livewire of the society as against the objective control model, where there is a clear separation with the military solely embroiled in the issues of arms and defense management. Like the United States of America, Nigeria operates a bridged model of Huntington's submissions. However, the scale is tilted more towards the objective model. The Nigerian state is more engrossed in maintaining objective control of the military to be subservient to its civilian government, with less practical efforts at ensuring a people-centric relation. Furthermore, the fact that there is dearth of inter-agency coordination, cooperation and collaboration evident in escalating feud between and amongst security agencies is critical.<sup>13</sup> It brings to fore a cogent concern to this study – how well can security forces (the military in this case) relate peacefully with the civilian populace that is distinct in composition and character in the reality of clashes amongst themselves?

For instance, the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) established as a counterterrorism mechanism in Northern Nigeria ostensibly is to protect civilians in the war-torn zone from the abuse of the military.<sup>14</sup> Contrary to expectation, democratic practice in Nigeria is yet to civilianize or democratize military personnel, where they become "citizens in uniform," which is a reflection of their democratic disposition.<sup>15</sup> This assertion holds true of the need for military personnel to be equipped with the capacity to transcend from military character to civil dispositions as the occasion warrants. This is even more important as they had become the bride of the Nigerian government in handling policing in recent times, shifting the barracks more and more close to the people, accentuated by the rapid urbanization as witnessed in contemporary times.

Indeed, before 1999, demilitarisation simply meant "return to civil rule" but following the return to civil rule in 1999, its meaning had extended to include demilitarisation of society from the array of attitudes, beliefs, orientations, customs, interests, actions and processes associated with the long entrenched and pervasive nature of military rule in the country.<sup>16</sup> Generally, it involves the total

observance of democratic principles by military personnel. Whilst the return to civil rule was greeted with cheerfulness, conscious efforts must be made for a proper reorientation of military personnel to the extent that they are made to understand that democracy guarantees equality and one's profession do not confer greater right(s),<sup>17</sup> especially in their relation with those who have come to be known with the unfortunate but generally accepted appellation of ordinary Nigerians or blood civilians.

Of significance, is the fact that many governments in Africa do not have popular support and inevitably assume regime security (government security) to be the same with citizen security? Practically, however, both are not entirely the same and the former receives maximum attention at the detriment of the later.<sup>18</sup> With this obscure understanding, democratisation and demilitarisation inadvertently serve as a threat to the government of the day, hence government's lipstick approach to it.

The concept of civil-military relations is not entirely new, as early military theoreticians such as Carl von Clausewitz and Sun Tsu had discussed varying aspects of the military and its relation with the rest of the society. However, its current understanding is tied to studies undertaken in the second half of the twentieth century. Of significance are the seminal works of Samuel Huntington on *The Soldier and the State* and Morris Janowitz's *The Professional Soldiers*.<sup>19</sup> Within its broad subject, which entails an all-inclusive interaction between the armed forces and the civilian populace, the field largely focuses on civilian control and direction of the armed forces, almost entirely at the institutional level and how best to avert military intervention (coup d'état) in governance. For Huntington, an objective control of the military is through the recognition of autonomous military professionalism, which keeps it independent, subordinated, and politically neutral and weakened but strong enough to defend the state. Huntington's view, like most scholars on the subject stresses at the institutional level, state-centric approach to civil-military engagements. Professionalism, for him, translates almost entirely to mean military obedience to civil authority. The circumstances differ a little for the emerging democracies in Africa, where the military establishments are used as coercive agents to ensure government's continuous hold to power.

In Nigeria, the military long wield and abuse of governmental power made a "demigod" out of every personnel of the armed forces in relation with their civilian counterparts. Hence, the appellation of individuals in plain clothes as "bloody civilians" within the military circle. This soon transcended into the Nigerian polity. Following this, an average

Nigerian sees men and officers of the armed forces as oppressors, thereby laying the foundation for mutual distrust and dysfunctional relationship. This fact clearly expresses the bane that have had debilitating effects on conflict situations that the military had been matched out to manage.<sup>20</sup> The Odi Massacre of 1999 in Bayelsa State, where a community was razed down by the military accentuates military highhandedness and heightened the spirit of dismay on the Nigerian state and the military, for example.

#### 4. Theoretical Framework

This work engages the theories of Peter D. Feaver's "Agency Theory" and Johan Galtung's "Structural Violence Theory" as guide for analysis. Feaver's Agency Theory of Civil-Military relations as espoused in his book, *"Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight and Civil Military Relations"*<sup>21</sup> is a principal-agent theory of relationship that explains the psychological, socio-economic and political dynamics of the relation between the military and the civilians. The theory postulates that:

*In democratic settings, military subordination is key, nonetheless, it does not necessarily assume military obedience to civilian authority as their preferences sometimes differ civil-military relations is a game of strategic interactions: the civilian, relatively monitoring their military agents and their military agents choosing whether to work or shirk, determined by available monitoring mechanism for punishment and reward.*

The thrust of this theory addresses the day-to-day interactions between the military and civilians, which is the focus of this study. For the Nigerian state's vested interest in the natural resources in Bayelsa State, monitoring and punishment of military personnel exhibiting uncivilized behaviours have remained doubtful, so long as it furthers the Nigerian state interest. Again, the Agency Theory aids the understanding of the complexities that surround the Ijos, the Kaiama Declaration and their agents such as militant and non-militant protest groups, community leaders and political leaders alike. Therefore, the concerns raised by the theory do not only apply to the Nigerian state and their military agents but also to the Ijos and their agents.

Furthermore, the study also employed Johan Galtung's Structural Violence Theory. The theory holds that social conflicts arise from the structural imbalances prevalent in society. Structural violence is sometimes classified as institutional violence. This is a situation where state laws,

establishments, policies and programmes are projected to systematically undo a target group owing to class, gender, religion and/or ethnicity. The theory attempts to explain the grievances and agitations arising from political and socio-economic exclusions and its myriad of consequences – poverty, illiteracy and injustice, underdevelopment, ensued violent conflict amongst others. It further sees pursuit of incompatible interests based on competition for resources, which in most cases are assumed to be scarce, as being responsible for social conflict.

This is why liberal structuralists have always calls for the elimination of structural defects with policy reforms.<sup>23</sup> However, the reality remains that for Nigeria, policy reforms had not brought the desired results in many spectra as there is dearth of political will to bring these policies to bear on the fabric of society. This paper synthesizes both theories in the interpretation of civil-military relations in Bayelsa State. This approach has however articulated the robust concerns for social conflicts triggers and forces influencing certain behaviours in social relationships.

#### **The Kaiama Declaration and the Nigerian State**

It is from the foregoing paradoxical position of the Ijos that the democratic transition programme of General Abdulsalami Abubakar presented a unique opportunity for the baby state of Bayelsa to make a case for self-determination. The programme brought a glimpse of hope to the Ijos, who had anticipated a paradigm shift in fortune, when the country finally transits to democratic governance. This was emphatically expressed in a communiqué, known as the Kaiama Declaration issued at Kaiama on 11th December, 1998 by participants at the All Ijo Youth Conference drawn from over five hundred communities. While the Declaration had been viewed and interpreted from different perspectives, what remains a melting point amongst scholars and commentators alike is that the Declaration ushered in a new approach to the Ijo struggle. With ten observations and ten resolutions, the Kaiama Declaration birthed the Ijo Youth Council (IYC), registering confrontational strategies to the Niger Delta Question and became the watershed for the current militarisation of Ijoland and Bayelsa State in particular. Observing inter alia the forceful marriage of Ijoland and the economic importance of the Ijo nation to the Nigerian state, unabated damage done to the natural environment and the people's health, transnational oil companies and state sponsored intra/inter-ethnic violence and military repression; the Declaration averred that all natural resources

within Ijo ethnic nationality are for the Ijos, the non-recognition of all obnoxious laws, stoppage of oil exploration and exploitation activities, immediate demobilization of military forces within the region, an understanding to remain within Nigeria but to work towards self-governance and resource control amongst others.

The Kaiama Declaration became the compass through which the Ijos sort for self-determination and resource control. Following the Declaration, what could be termed the Isaac Adaka Boro Rebirth was inaugurated at Kaiama, Bayelsa State. The Ijos received a new mandate for self-emancipation. The thin line that separates Boro and the present advocates, is that while Boro sought for outright political independence from the Nigerian State with the Twelve Day Revolution in 1966, the congregants at Kaiama sought for economic emancipation. However, as the Ijo youths launched into confrontational agitation at the expiration of the 30th December, 1998 ultimatum issued for the withdrawal of 'military forces of occupation' as contained in Article 3 of the Declaration, it became a justification for increased military mobilization in the state. What the federal forces had achieved so far is to ensure safe passage of oil and gas from the state and broker an uneasy peace. Senator Amange sums it this way:

*As the center piece of any effort towards the achievement of lasting peace or development possibility in the Niger Delta region, the militancy issue begs a more realistic and pragmatic approach. Already, it is obvious that the mere militarisation of the region does not offer a genuine peace deal. At best it has only aggravated the violence. The consequences are daily played out on international scene through the domestic drama we are all witnesses to. The militant question goes beyond the manifest violence. It also has socio-psychological dimensions to it and hence, requires methods that would adequately address these unseen ramifications.*

The Kaiama Declaration, though an Ijo prescription, it "brought wide spread exposure and optimism and ushered in a confrontational approach" to the age-long Niger Delta Question while "the Nigerian state was bent to doing their will."<sup>28</sup> For instance, David Passe (a Chadian) after a tour of the Niger Delta remarked "if I had been born in the oil producing areas of the Niger Delta, I would have since become a revolutionary." Attempt to implement the letters and spirits of the Declaration at the expiration of the 30th December, 1998 ultimatum to multinational oil companies to cease

operations were met with the might of the Federal Government. T.K. Ogoriba recounted his ordeal as he was arrested and detained for days. The Kaiama mandate led the youth to form various armed protest groups, such as Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF) employing guerilla tactics against the Nigerian state, targeting Multinational Oil Corporations (MNOCs), their installations and personnel, inadvertently pitching military personnel against them up until the announcement and implementation of the Presidential Amnesty Programme in 2009.

The Kaiama Declaration had remained a celebrated and revered affirmation for self-determination amongst the Ijos, with an annual commemoration event marking the Declaration. Comrade Joseph Evah reiterated that “the Ijaws will continue to defend the Kaiama Declaration because it is our identity. Very soon, the Kaiama Declaration will be our way of life. It will be our character and characteristic.” He added that the future of the Ijos lies in the Kaiama Declaration, it’s thus the soul and spirit of the Ijo people that has become a “living tradition or existential guide” for the future engagement with the Nigerian state.

#### **Civil-Military Relations in Bayelsa State**

As aforementioned, civil-military relations in Bayelsa State is a product of the undue militarisation geared towards ensuring the free flow of oil and gas from the state. The Federal Government of Nigeria in her rent-seeking approach to consolidate on the gains of oil wealth had initiated and executed militaristic options such as the 1998 and 1999 Kaiama and Odi killings respectively. There is no gainsaying the fact that there had always been military presence since the discovery of oil in commercial quantity in today’s Bayelsa State, howbeit, it has been minimal. The turn of events followed the Communique issued at Kaiama, Bayelsa State and the attendant effects on the polity. Attempts aimed at implementing the Declaration such as the 30th December, 1998 peaceful protest with over 2,000 Ijo youths dressed in black, holding candles and singing on the streets of Yenagoa were shot at by military personnel stationed at the Government House. Generally, the events of 30th December to January 1999 across Bayelsa State major communities such as Yenagoa, Kaiama, Oloibiri, Odi suggest a death toll of over one hundred and possibly two hundred civilians, killed by soldiers and Mobile Police.

In October 2002, the Human Rights Watch reported the deployment of Mobile Police, the Army

and the Navy across oil producing areas and that government has taken steps to create special units dedicated to security for the oil industry. Today, the full might of the military – the Army, Navy and Air Force are present in Bayelsa State. A military personnel listed the Central Naval Command Headquarters, 16 Brigade of the Nigerian Army and Headquarters Mobility Command of the Nigerian Air Force and other military formations in the state has been instrumental to reducing kidnapping, pipeline vandalism and oil theft. Whilst this is a remarkable achievement, it does not, however, address the underlining factors that dictated these vices in the first instance. The first cog in the wheel of civil-military relations in Bayelsa State is undoubtedly the gory invasion of Odi Town in 1999, where the town was razed down (with the exception of three buildings – Anglican Church, Bank and a Health Centre) by military personnel as a response to the killing of twelve (12) policemen by militants. The rape on Odi only made the Ijos more determined on the Kaiama Declaration.

The military’s role in Internal Security Operations in Bayelsa State is majored in Protection of Oil Facilities and VIPs (especially expatriates in MNOCs), Road Blocks, Crowd Dispersal and Dispute Resolutions. These functions had no doubt brought about a new pattern of relations between the military and the civil populace. An adult male residing close to an Air Force residential quarters in Yenagoa sums it this way:

*Today’s military relation with civilians is unusual. It ought not to be so. Government failure in putting good structures like the Nigerian Police is instrumental. The military should have remained as an eagle, seen once in a while. Civilians no longer have much respect for military personnel because of their everyday presence, especially when personnel are at checkpoints collecting monies from civilians. However, there is a sense of security within this area because of the presence of the residential quarters.*

Corroborating the security importance of military personnel to the civilian populace, Margaret Enaruyou stated that she favours the presence of soldiers within towns because they provide enough security and the relation between the military and civilians is cordial, with the exception of a few new recruits who tend to showcase their physical strength in sharp contrast with those personnel who had resided with the civilian population overtime. Another critical aspect of this relation is the use of men in uniforms by MNOCs to deter host communities from embarking on protest movements where and when they (host

communities) perceive injustice like non-implementation or partial implementation of Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with MNOCs. For instance, in Nembe a non-violent protests bordering on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) of MNOCs snowballed to Mr. Numokari Walter being shot on the leg by Naval Officers in 1994, 40 and this situation deepens the distrust and anxiety of the peoples towards military personnel. Among other things, the overtly iron fist syndrome of the military actually informed the Kaiama Declaration's call for "the immediate withdrawal from Ijo land of all military forces of occupation and repression by the Nigerian State. Any oil company that employs the services of the armed forces of the Nigerian State to 'protect' its operations will be viewed as an enemy of the Ijo people."

Recently on the 16th April, 2023, the frosty manifestation of relation between men in uniform and civilians is evidenced at Otuasega Community in Ogbia, Bayelsa State where age-long traditional passage rites of a late king witnessed the shedding of blood of two Emeyal II youth, Chief Okrinya and Mr. Daniel O. Obhuo. Emeyal II like other neighbouring communities graced the burial ceremony of Late Chief Christopher Awe Omonibo of Otuasega Community to perform the 'No More Mercy' burial ritual. The tradition holds that neighbouring communities in close affinity with the bereaved community, upon invitation, come to perform 'ritual cleansing' of the community during the burial of a king and this is made public to residents. During the ritual, the visiting communities are at liberty to take possession of 'exposed' crops and animals.

Consequently, the Emeyal II indigenes had attempted to implement this at a local poultry farm but were resisted by the poultry manager, who had anticipated their coming and requested military personnel at a nearby Army checkpoint to be on guard. After exhaustive negotiation on the number of chickens to be released as part of the cleansing, no agreement was reached and the crowd moved in forcefully. As events unfold, the Army decided to disperse them, including Otuasega indigenes at the scene with gunshots. Shortly after the disperse, Obhuo, who was not well abreast of what has transpired because of a refreshment break he took returned to the poultry scene in search of his two younger brothers. He met Okrinya and his two brothers there and the unfortunate event happened shortly after leading to the death of Okrinya on the spot whereas he sustained gun injury and was rushed to the Federal Medical Centre and later to the Gloryland-Inri Medical Centre, Yenagoa. Obhuo reflected summarily on the incidence this way:

*I came back to the poultry and I was angry with my brothers because everybody has left. I saw Okrinya coming out from the poultry and one of soldiers was telling him, I mark your face, I go catch you. I pleaded with Okrinya to carry me and my brothers so we can go home. As we were going, the military checkpoint from where the poultry soldiers came started closing the road. We turned the bike and started going backwards when the poultry soldiers waved us to stop. Afraid, we stopped. I told you that I will catch you, said the same soldier. They hit us with the gun and we fell and started begging them. While Okrinya was trying to pick up his bike, the officer that threatened him shot him dead. My brothers ran away and another soldier shot me. The next thing I knew was I was in the hospital.*

In the spur of the moment, Emeyal II and Otuasega youth besieged the Army and burnt a military vehicle. A purely traditional affair metamorphosed to the loss of a young man, further straining the relation between the military and the civilian natives, and inadvertently the relation between the two communities, which had enjoyed socio-cultural exchanges for years. Daniel Obhuo further lamented, "I am the only witness. Thank God I am now alive to tell people the story. The Military Police arrested the two soldiers. We don't have the money to take the matter to court, so, I don't know what has happened to them. But the Military Police gave me One Hundred Thousand Naira for medical treatment. They are the wicked people that we can mingle with as civilians." This is one example of many cases of extrajudicial killing perpetuated by the Nigerian military.

The above nonetheless, there are few bridges that attempts to cordially connect the military and the civilian populace in the state. For example, the Air Force Residential Quarters located at PDP Road, Yenizue-Gene, Yenagoa plays host to football trainings every Saturday, where civilians are welcomed to participate. Again, the Headquarters of the Central Naval Command at Porbeni Camp, Agudama, Yenagoa has its gates open to civilian Christian and Muslim faithful's to fellowship at their respective worship centres. The point stressed here, however, is that there had remained an overwhelming case of military highhandedness in their day-to-day relation with civilians in the state and this is premised on over militarisation and their resolve to do the bidding of their paymasters – the Nigerian state and MNOCs.

### Concluding Remarks

As has already been established, a major 'headache' of democracy is the 'military challenge.' That is, the question of how best to keep the force that has legitimate monopoly of coercive power within its bounds. This civil-military problematique emanates from what Peter D. Feaver referred to as the two central desiderata – to have protection by the military and to have protection from the military. These two are in conflict because efforts to assure one side complicate efforts to assure the other.<sup>45</sup> Civil-Military Relations is a two-way traffic, involving how both sides view and relate with each other. The bulk of responsibility for conviviality in Civil-Military Relations is on the military establishment and can only achieve this through an array of professional conducts by the military. Military professionalism must be assessed through military personnel's relation with the civilian populace other than their commitment to be subservient to a democratic government. Logically, the true test of harmonious Civil-Military affairs can only be measured at the individual level. It is at this level that the relation becomes more engaging, multifaceted and complex. It therefore behooves on the armed forces to ensure that relations between them and citizens must be cordial as its same force that is meant to protect the citizens. Thus, efforts that are solely geared toward regime protection fall short of the complexities of civil-military relations.

Interestingly, one very cogent method the military had employed is to engage in image building. "Today's military professionalism essentially incorporates public acceptability,"<sup>46</sup> as the Armed Forces are meant to serve the people in the first instance. The establishments of the Department of Civil-Military Relations at the Defence Headquarters, Abuja, the Nigerian Army School of Public Relations and Information (NASPRI), the "New SOJA" and "NASPRI News" among others are measures aimed at widening the frontiers of civil-military relations. While the military as an institution attempts to launder its battered public perception, it must be watchful not to give room to erring soldiers to drag the institution to the mud. The viewpoint is that upholding the constitution is the ultimate check and mechanism that could be used to professionalise the military, <sup>47</sup> and to achieve professionalisation of the Force, adequate

attention had to be given to entry selection process of the military personnel from psychological profiling, respect for quota system, training and retraining to non-selective reward and punishment system.

Reward and punishment mechanisms, if not rightfully managed could pose a challenge to civil-military relations. Where commensurate reward and punishment is not applied where and when necessary, soldiers are more likely to derail from their professional carriage. The Nigerian military is not innocent of shielding deviant soldiers from the wrath of the law, especially where such offences do not directly contradict military laws. This had given rise to the "Unknown Soldier" phenomenon. For example, the soldiers, who carried out human rights abuses at Odi were not prosecuted and the Commanding Officer had been reportedly promoted.<sup>48</sup> This gives credence to the fact that the Nigerian state's Civil-Military concern is only state-centric and not people-centric. Hence, the Federal Government and their chief agent (Defence Headquarters) shy from the punishment of soldiers who err, inasmuch as such offences do not have direct bearing on military law and the government's stability. More so, a weak civil society is a challenge to military professionalisation in Nigeria. They (civil society) are essentially participatory, a broad-based and self-governing institution engages in shaping public affairs, public policy and governance."<sup>49</sup> However, the vitality of civil society keeps the military in check as well as a countervailing force to military excesses.

Most importantly, oil politics had become a major challenge and an underlying factor in shaping the dynamics of civil-military relations in Bayelsa State as the Nigerian state and her agents-MNOCs has remained unwavering in their commitment to ensuring the free flow of oil and gas resources from the bowels of the Niger Delta states. This undeterred commitment has informed the unending deployment of military force in Internal Security Operations (ISOs) in Bayelsa State with its attendant consequences on the Civil-Military Relations within the state. The militarisation of Bayelsa state and other oil producing states is in sharp contrast with the low military presence in non-oil producing states in Nigeria.

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