



Introduction

The largest sector of commerce in Nigeria is without a doubt its petroleum. The oil companies in the nation reign supreme as a pivotal force that commands the everyday lives of Nigerians. The lines have been blurred between company and government when it comes to the petroleum giants. With this, oil companies have been able to violate the rights of the people living within its control, exploiting them for their own gains with zero regard for the humanity that these people possess. From stifling labor unions designated for workers in the industry to violence and exploitation of local populations, the oil companies operating out of Nigeria have been exploiting Nigerians for decades.

Labor Laws

- Contract of Employment is required
- Terms of employment must be presented in contract
- Payment is due in cash at the end of the pay period
- Workers are entitled to a specified amount of holidays, sick time, and worker's compensation
- Workers have the right to collectively bargain through unions
- It is unlawful to discriminate against an employee based on their union status

Exploitations by Oil Companies

- Exploitation of Ogoniland by Royal Dutch Shell – 1958
 - Thousands of barrels of oil spilled in region contaminating land and water
 - Gas flaring caused acid rain and health problems to Ogoni
 - Hiring of government-sponsored military personnel to control protests
- Casualization of workforce in Oil companies
 - Classification of workers as contractors to deny benefits
 - Poverty-level wages
 - Non-payment of wages
 - Suppression of union efforts and discrimination of unionized employees

Nigeria Unemployment



Fig. 2: Nigerian Unemployment Rate, 2016-2019, Courtesy of Trading Economics

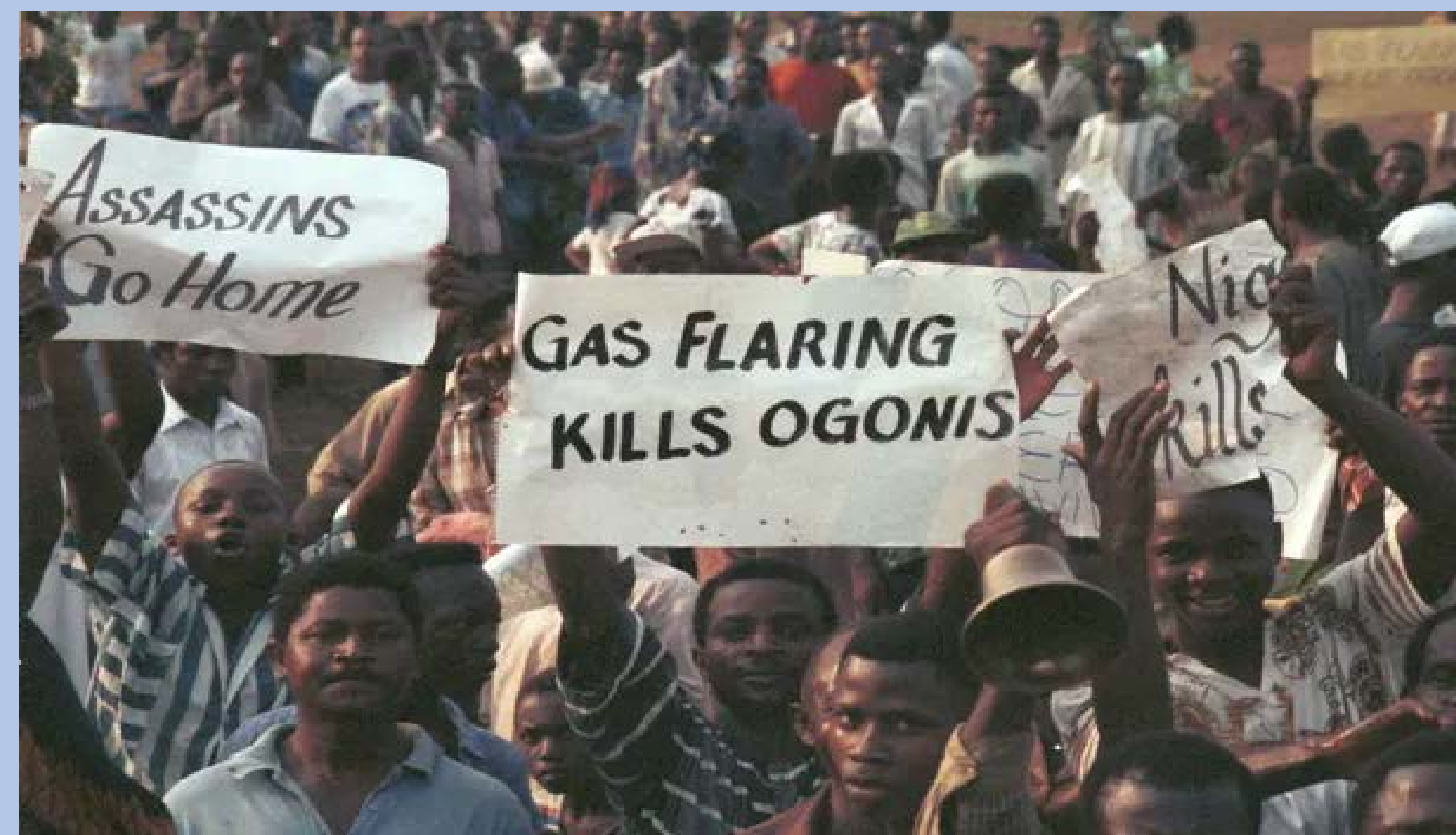


Fig. 3: Ogoni Day demonstration in Nigeria, 1993, Courtesy of Tim Lambon/Greenpeace

Country Statistics

Topic	2019	Unit
Population	200	Million
GDP	410	million USD
Unemployment Rate	23.1	Percent
Youth Employment Rate	36.5	Percent
Individual Living Wage	43,200	NGN/month
Family Living Wage	137,600	NGN/month
Minimum Wage	18,000	NGN/month

Fig. 1: Population statistics of Nigeria, Courtesy of Trading Economics

Remedies

- Stricter laws on classification of workers to prevent oil companies from misclassifying for the purpose of denying benefits
- More benefits given to contract employees
- Allowing Oil Companies to have less control over Nigerian politics
- Raising minimum wage
- Providing workers with more resources to minimize discrimination based on union status

Conclusions

The comingling of the oil corporations and the government has allowed for these companies to easily violate the rights of local populations and their own workers.

Oil companies have been allowed to take control of land that is not theirs and destroy it, rendering it unusable by the local populations. They have also been allowed to misclassify their employees as contract workers in order to pay them lower wages, provide less safety equipment, and deny them benefits. In addition, these companies have been actively stifling union efforts.

The economic power of these petroleum companies have allowed them to effectively control the Nigerian government as they see fit, as long as they continue to turn over a profit and provide industry for the nation.

References

- Burgess, J. (2019, December 19) Chevron's Nigerian oil output threatened as workers strike. Retrieved April 17, 2020.
- Federation of Nigeria. (1971). Retrieved April 16, 2020.
- Houeland, C. (April, 2015). Casualization and Conflict in the Niger Delta: Nigerian Oil Workers' Unions Between Companies and Communities. *Revue Tiers Monde*, 224, 25-46. Retrieved 16 April, 2020.
- Larson, V. (2018, November 5). Fact-Finding Trip to Shell's Nigerian Operations Proves Eye-Opening to USW Oil Worker. Retrieved April 17, 2020.
- Trading Economics. (n.d.). Nigeria Population 1960-2019. Retrieved April 17, 2020.
- UNPO. (2018, March 30). Ogoni: Timeline of the Ogoni Struggle. Retrieved April 16, 2020.