

# Lekeh Development Foundation in collaboration with Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP)

## Heroes Week of Action to honor the Ogoni Nine

### Our Background

The Lekeh Development Foundation (LEDEF) is a grassroots based advocacy organization that works with communities to address local and global challenges in a constructive manner. LEDEF was created with a team of ecological defenders trained by Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) to monitor, verify and report issues in the field of oil spills, gas flaring, water-related issues, land grabs and violation of environmental/human rights in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Our themes include climate justice, energy justice, gender justice, and livelihood support. We have several years of cumulative experience in the field, in advocacy, in campaigning on climate change, devastated environments and environmental crises. The LEDEF has championed grassroots struggles demanding climate justice, a clean environment, Water Not Coal and Life After Coal, and has been working with other organizations to strengthen the local struggle to ensure that the community voice is heard. LEDEF is a community rooted advocacy organization that strongly works to promote human rights and end fossil fuels, black soot, gas flaring, climate change, waste related issues, poverty, and other environmental degradation issues.

### Project Demographic

The Ogoni, an indigenous people in Nigeria, live on 404 square miles of the coastal plain's terraces to the north-east of the Niger Delta. Inhabited by 1.5M people the population density of Ogoni territory at about 1,200 per square mile is among the highest in any rural area of the world and compares with the Nigerian national population of 200M. The Ogoni people have settled this territory as farmers and fishermen since remembered time and had established a well organised social system before the British colonialists invaded in 1901. Petroleum was discovered in Ogoni in 1958 by the multinational oil company, Shell and since then an estimated \$30 billion worth of oil has been carted away from Ogoniland. In return for this, the Ogoni people have received NOTHING.



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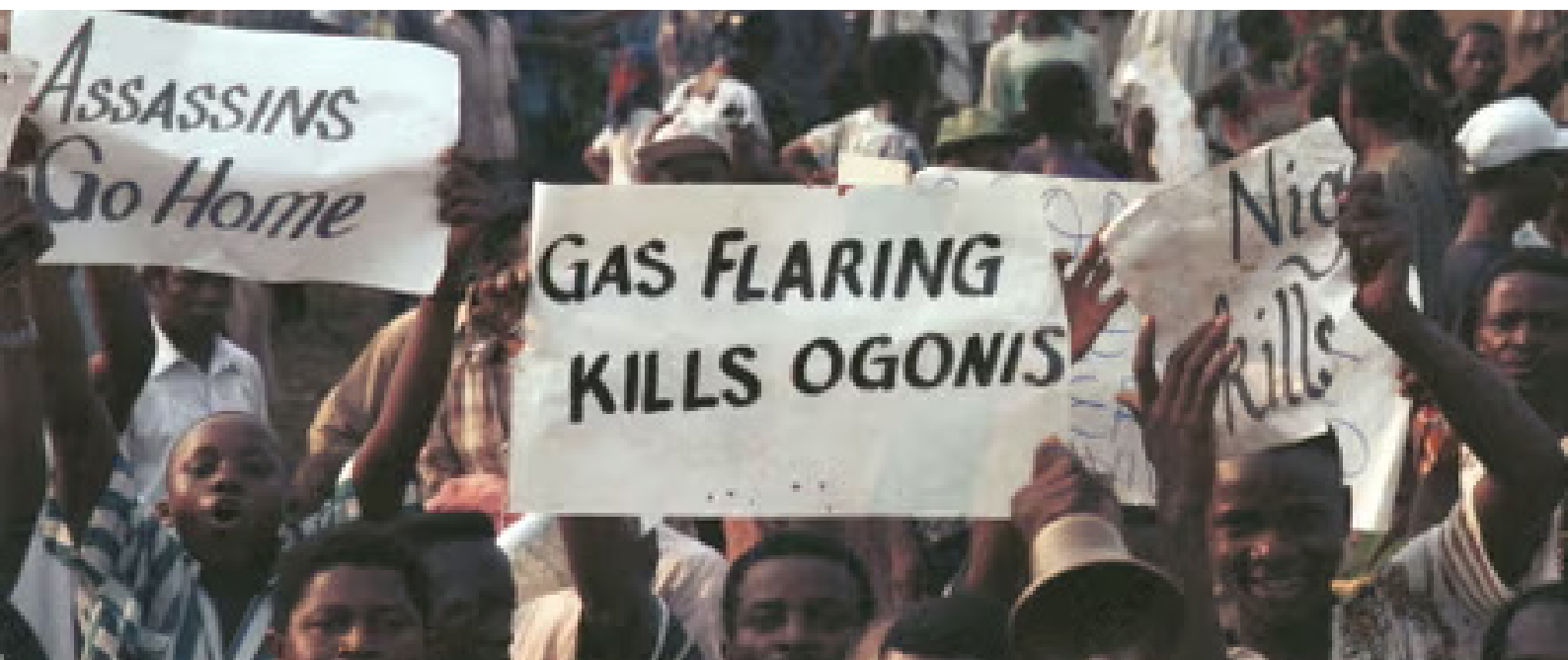
Oil exploration has turned Ogoni into a wasteland: lands, streams and creeks totally and continually polluted; the atmosphere has been poisoned, charged as it is with hydrocarbon vapours, methane, carbon monoxide, carbon and soot emitted by gas which has been flared 24 hours a day for 35 years in very close proximity to human habitation. Acid rain, oil spillages and oil-blowouts have devastated Ogoni territory. High pressure oil pipelines dangerously criss-cross the surfaces of Ogoni farmland and villages. The 404 square miles (approx 34 miles by 12 miles) of rich, hitherto fertile Ogoni land now hosts a Petro-chemical complex, a fertilizer plant, two oil refineries, and over 100 oil wells in 8 oilfields with 4 flow stations flaring gas 24 hours a day.

### Context

The Ogoni Nine were a group of nine activists from the Ogoni ethnic group in Nigeria, including Ken Saro-Wiwa, who were involved in a nonviolent struggle against the environmental and social impacts of oil exploration in the Niger Delta. They protested against the oil industry's activities, particularly the operations of the multinational company Shell, which they believed were causing severe pollution and degradation of their land.

In 1994, the Nigerian military government arrested and charged the Ogoni Nine for the murder of four Ogoni chiefs, following a controversial trial that was widely criticized for lack of evidence and due process. Despite international appeals for clemency, they were sentenced to death and executed in 1995, which drew significant global attention and condemnation.

The struggle of the Ogoni Nine brought international awareness to the human



rights abuses and environmental issues faced by the Ogoni people and other communities in the Niger Delta. Their sacrifice and the subsequent outrage played a crucial role in galvanizing international pressure for justice, environmental protection, and corporate accountability in the region. November 10th holds significance for the Ogoni struggle as it marks the anniversary of the execution of the Ogoni Nine, including Ken Saro-Wiwa, in 1995. On this day, the Nigerian government carried out the execution, which sparked outrage and drew global attention to the human rights abuses and environmental issues faced by the Ogoni people.



The execution of the Ogoni Nine on November 10th became a symbol of oppression, injustice, and the struggle for the rights of indigenous communities affected by the oil industry in the Niger Delta. It further intensified international calls for justice, environmental protection, and corporate accountability. Since then, November





10th has been commemorated by Ogoni people and human rights activists around the world as a day to remember the sacrifices made by the Ogoni Nine and to continue advocating for environmental justice, human rights, and environmental preservation in the Niger Delta and beyond. It serves as a reminder of the ongoing challenges faced by the Ogoni people and the need for continued efforts to address their concerns.

Activists and community members involved in the Ogoni struggle often face repression, intimidation, and threats from various actors, including the government, security forces, and sometimes even corporate interests. This creates a hostile environment and makes it difficult to speak out and advocate for their rights. The Nigerian government's response to the Ogoni struggle has been mixed. While there have been some efforts to address the environmental issues and engage in dialogue, progress has been slow, and many feel that the government has not done enough to address the concerns of the Ogoni people. The Ogoni struggle often faces resource constraints, making it challenging to sustain long-term advocacy efforts. Limited access

to funding, solidarity support, and organizational capacity can hinder their ability to effectively address the issues they face. Navigating the legal systems, both nationally and internationally, to seek justice and hold accountable those responsible for human rights abuses and environmental degradation can be a daunting task. Legal processes can be lengthy, expensive, and require expertise that may not always be readily available. The Ogoni struggle involves various stakeholders with differing interests. This includes multinational corporations, the government, local communities, and even within the Ogoni community itself. Balancing these interests and finding common ground can be challenging and can slow progress towards meaningful change. Despite these challenges, the Ogoni struggle continues to persevere, driven by the determination and resilience of individuals and communities committed to justice, human rights, and environmental preservation.

The overall goal of the project is to work together to strengthen the Ogoni struggle and promote environmental justice by uniting environmental/human rights groups and impacted communities to phase out fossil fuel projects in the region.



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## **Objectives**

To strengthen the capacity of Ogoni environmental/human rights groups, CBOs, CSOs, NGOs, women's groups, and youth-led organizations towards ensuring environmental justice.

To strengthen the Ogoni struggle and coalition action towards achieving a phase out of fossil fuel projects.

Strengthened the Ogoni struggle and coalition action towards achieving a phase out of fossil fuel projects.

## **Activities**

To organize Heroes Week of Action.

November 6th to 7th - Capacity building workshop for Ogoni CBOs, CSOs and NGOs on project design, proposal writing, project implementation, resource mobilization, media engagement, evaluation and project monitoring.

November 8th - Conversation with Ken Saro Wiwa

November 9th - Candle night in remembrance of the Ogoni nine.

November 10th - Peaceful march and culture display.

January 4th – Outdoor environmental campaign on the negative impact of oil spills, gas flaring and climate disaster to mark the Ogoni day celebration 2024.

## **Outcomes**

Strengthened the capacity of Ogoni environmental/human rights groups, CBOs, CSOs, NGOs towards ensuring environmental justice.

Strengthened the Ogoni struggle and coalition action towards achieving a phase out of fossil fuel projects.

## **Project Partners**

Project partners include Movement for the survival of the Ogoni People MOSOP, Ken Saro Wiwa Legacy Group, Ogoni Solidarity Forum, Yeraba Women Foundation and Society for Women and Youth Affairs.

## **Target Audience**

Target audience: Beneficiaries of the project shall be the youth of marginalized Communities, Ogoni CBOs forum, women groups, environmental/human rights activists, climate activists, CSOs, civil society actors, Ogoni student leader's forum, gender campaigners, community leaders.

## **Project Period**

The project will commence from 6th of November 2023 to 30th of April 2024.