

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: NGA30082
Country: Nigeria
Date: 1 May 2006

Keywords: Nigeria – Ukwu – Oil drilling – Imos – Youth Wing – Demonstrations

This response was prepared by the Country Research Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

Questions

1. Please provide a map showing Ukwu and surrounding towns/villages.
2. How far is Ukwu from Lagos?
3. How long would it take to travel to Ukwu from Lagos by bus?
4. Please provide information on any oil drilling activity in or near Ukwu.
5. Are there any reports of Ukwu and its environment being adversely affected by such activity?
6. Are there any reports of a protest in Ukwu on 28 February 2005? If so, please provide details.
7. Were any people arrested as a result of such a protest?
8. Please provide any information concerning the activities in Ukwu of a group known as the "Youth Wing".
9. Was such a group involved in organising a protest in Ukwu in February 2005?
10. How have the authorities responded more generally to protests against oil drilling operations in Imo State?
11. Is there evidence that people involved in such protests have been seriously harmed by the authorities?

RESPONSE

1. Please provide a map showing Ukwu and surrounding towns/villages.
2. How far is Ukwu from Lagos?
3. How long would it take to travel to Ukwu from Lagos by bus?

A few maps of Ukwu and surrounding towns/villages from *Microsoft Encarta* are attached (*Microsoft Encarta Interactive Atlas* - 'Ukwu Nigeria' 2000, (CDROM) - Attachment 1; and (*Microsoft Encarta Interactive Atlas* - 'Niger Delta Nigeria' 2000, (CDROM) - Attachment 2). While no information is located on the distance between Ukwu and Lagos by road, the straight line distance is calculated at approx 350 km (*Microsoft Encarta Interactive Atlas* - 'Niger Delta Nigeria' 2000 (CDROM), zoomed out version - Attachment 3).

There are a few bus companies serving the southern part of Nigeria such as *Ekene Dili Chukwu* and *ABC* ('Destinations: Lagos: Nigeria' 2005, Travelmax website, Lonely Planet publication - http://www.istc.org/sisp/index.htm?fx=destination&loc_id=158158§ion=getting_around -

Accessed 3 April 2006 – Attachment 4) but the timetable could not be found for the trip between Lagos and Ukwu.

An Internet article refers to a traveller stating “five to seven hours to reach Onitsha from Lagos” (Edohasim, Ebenezer 2003, ‘Onitsha-Owerri Road: The Easiest Way To Die’, September - <http://odili.net/news/source/2003/sep/5/82.html> - Accessed 3 April 2006 – Attachment 5). Given Ukwu is south-west of Onitsha and off the main road between Lagos and Onitsha (*Microsoft Encarta Interactive Atlas* - 'Niger Delta Nigeria' 2000, (CDROM), zoomed out version - Attachment 3), it would be quite plausible that the Ukwu-Lagos trip would take eight hours by bus. It appears that the road in Nigeria is out of repairs in many places and dangerous (Edohasim, Ebenezer 2003, ‘Onitsha-Owerri Road: The Easiest Way To Die’, September - <http://odili.net/news/source/2003/sep/5/82.html> - Accessed 3 April 2006 – Attachment 5; ‘Transport’ 2006, igboguid website - <http://www.igboguide.org/index.php?l=chapter5> - Accessed 3 April 2006 – Attachment 6).

- 4. Please provide information on any oil drilling activity in or near Ukwu.**
- 5. Are there any reports of Ukwu and its environment being adversely affected by such activity?**
- 6. Are there any reports of a protest in Ukwu on 28 February 2005? If so, please provide details.**
- 7. Were any people arrested as a result of such a protest?**
- 8. Please provide any information concerning the activities in Ukwu of a group known as the "Youth Wing".**
- 9. Was such a group involved in organising a protest in Ukwu in February 2005?**
- 10. How have the authorities responded more generally to protests against oil drilling operations in Imo State?**
- 11. Is there evidence that people involved in such protests have been seriously harmed by the authorities?**

No information has been located on the oil drilling activities in or near Ukwu or in the Imo State, its impacts on the environment, protests or arrests resulting from the activities and the authorities’ response in or around February 2005.

The Amnesty International comments on a few incidents in the Niger Delta regions in February 2005, although they are not related to the Imo State or Ukwu. They include an armed forces raid on the town of Odioma on 19 February 2005 and the intrusion of a few hundred residents of Ugborodo and their supporters into the premises of Chevron Nigeria’s oil terminal at Escravos on 4 February 2005 (AI 2005, *Nigeria - Ten years on: Injustice and violence haunt the oil Delta*, 3 November, AI Index: AFR 44/022/2005 <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAFR440222005> - Accessed 27 April 2006 - Attachment 7; see also the map with the locality markings at *Microsoft Encarta Interactive Atlas* - 'Niger Delta Nigeria' 2000, (CDROM), zoomed out version - Attachment 3). For the further details of the Odioma incident, see ‘2 Nigerian Soldiers Destroy Odioma Community, 50 local people killed’ 2005, Environmental Rights Action, 19 February - http://www.eraction.org/modules.php?name=News&new_topic=http://www.eraction.org/modules.php?name=ERA_News&file=article&sid=15 - Accessed 1 May 2006 - Attachment 8).

An AFP report, “Shell confirms oil spill in southeastern Nigeria state” dated 18 June 2004 refers to the spill caused by sabotage in the Imo State, the resultant environmental damages and the community response (‘Shell confirms oil spill in southeastern Nigeria state’ 2004, *AFP*,

18 June - <http://www.terraily.com/2004/040618181259.tj1fah3o.html> - Accessed 28 April 2006 - Attachment 9). Another report covering the spill, however, differs on the cause of the spill ('Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps' (undated), Steeltank.com website http://www.steeltank.com/library/Tank_Petroleum_Use_Mishaps/news-062904.pdf - Accessed 20 April 2006 (sourced from <http://allafrica.com/stories/200406180162.html>) - Attachment 10). The pipeline was ruptured at the Umuogwa community, Awara in Ohaji-Egbema local government area of Imo State and the damage was estimated at \$5.6 million dollars ('Shell confirms oil spill in southeastern Nigeria state' 2004, *AFP*, 18 June - <http://www.terraily.com/2004/040618181259.tj1fah3o.html> - Accessed 28 April 2006 - Attachment 9; and 'Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps' (undated), Steeltank.com website http://www.steeltank.com/library/Tank_Petroleum_Use_Mishaps/news-062904.pdf - Accessed 20 April 2006 - Attachment 10). *Microsoft Encarta Interactive Atlas* indicates that Awarra is approx. 100 km south of Ukwu (*Microsoft Encarta Interactive Atlas* - 'Niger Delta Nigeria' 2000, (CDROM), zoomed out version – Attachment 3).

For further background reading on the oil disputes, demonstrations, spillages, environmental damages and the authorities' response in the Niger Delta regions, see

- HRW 2002, *The Niger Delta: No Democratic Dividend*, October, Vol 14, No 7 (A) http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/nigeria3/Nigeria1002.htm#P62_897 - Accessed 27 April 2006 - Attachment 11;
- 'Chevron Moves to End Violence in Niger Delta' 2005, *Comtex*, 19 September – Attachment 12 (FACTIVA);
- 'This Day (Nigeria) - AAGM - Communities Give Shell Ultimatum to Complete Projects' 2003, *This Day (Nigeria)* 16 June – Attachment 13 (FACTIVA);
- 'Imo to probe disturbances in Njaba' 2006, *The Tide News*, 14 April <http://www.thetidenews.com/article.aspx?qrDate=04/14/2006&qrTitle=Imo%20to%20probe%20disturbances%20in%20Njaba&qrColumn=SOUTH%20EAST> - Accessed 20 April 2006 - Attachment 14;
- 'Nigerian protesters set police station ablaze, free detainees' 2006, *BBC*, 11 April - Attachment 15 (FACTIVA);
- Nkwopara, Chidi 2006, 'Nigeria: Oguta Youths Threaten to Kidnap Oil Workers' *Vanguard (Lagos)*, 28 April <http://allafrica.com/stories/200604280045.html> - Accessed 1 May 2006 – Attachment 16;
- Odittah, Chuka 2004, 'Imo House Charges Oil Companies', 16 November <http://www.thisdayonline.com/archive/2003/11/11/20031111pol04.html> - Accessed 28 April 2006 - Attachment 17;
- 'Nigeria Oil Regions Subject to Brutal Repression, According to Amnesty Report' 2005, *Global Insight Daily Analysis*, 4 November – Attachment 18 (FACTIVA);
- 'Nigerian community claims seven killed at protest on Shell oil rig' 2004, *AFX Asia*, 30 November - Attachment 19 (FACTIVA);

- ‘Oil drilling’ 2002, *Lloyd's List International*, 19 August - Attachment 20 (FACTIVA);
- ‘Seven die, 14 injured in pipeline explosion in Nigeria’ 2001, *AFP*, 8 November - Attachment 21 (FACTIVA);
- ‘International Campaigns: Nigeria - ERA Monitor Report No. 8: Six Year Old Spillage in Botem-Tai’ (undated), *Sierra Club* <http://sierraclub.org/human-rights/nigeria/background/spill.asp> - Accessed 1 May 2006 – Attachment 22.

List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:

Google, Vivisimo & Copernic 2001 Personal Agent search engines

BBC News website <http://www.bbc.co.uk>

The Guardian website <http://www.guardian.co.uk/>

CNN website <http://www.cnn.com/>

Far Eastern Economic Review <http://www.feer.com/>

UNHCR

REFWORLD

UNHCR Refugee Information Online

Databases:		
Public	FACTIVA	Reuters Business Briefing
DIMIA	BACIS	Country Information
	REFINFO	IRBDC Research Responses (Canada)
RRT	ISYS	RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State <i>Country Reports on Human Rights Practices</i> .
RRT Library	FIRST	RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. *Microsoft Encarta Interactive Atlas* - 'Ukwu Nigeria' 2000. (CDROM)
2. *Microsoft Encarta Interactive Atlas* - 'Niger Delta Nigeria' 2000. (CDROM)
3. *Microsoft Encarta Interactive Atlas* - 'Niger Delta Nigeria' 2000, zoomed out version. (CDROM)
4. ‘Destinations: Lagos: Nigeria’ 2005, Travelmax website, Lonely Planet publication. (http://www.istc.org/sisp/index.htm?fx=destination&loc_id=158158§ion=getting_a_round - Accessed 3 April 2006)
5. Edohasim, Ebenezer 2003, ‘Onitsha-Owerri Road: The Easiest Way To Die’, September. (<http://odili.net/news/source/2003/sep/5/82.html> - Accessed 3 April)

6. 'Transport' 2006, igboguid website. (<http://www.igboguide.org/index.php?l=chapter5> - Accessed 3 April 2006)
7. AI 2005, *Nigeria - Ten years on: Injustice and violence haunt the oil Delta*, 3 November, AI Index: AFR 44/022/2005
(<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAFR440222005> - Accessed 27 April 2006).
8. '2 Nigerian Soldiers Destroy Odioma Community, 50 local people killed' 2005' 2005, Environmental Rights Action, 19 February.
(http://www.eration.org/modules.php?name=News&new_topic=http://www.eration.org/modules.php?name=ERA_News&file=article&sid=15 - Accessed 1 May 2006)
9. 'Shell confirms oil spill in southeastern Nigeria state' 2004, *AFP*, 18 June.
(<http://www.terraily.com/2004/040618181259.tj1fah3o.html> - Accessed 28 April 2006)
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<http://allafrica.com/stories/200406180162.html>).
11. HRW 2002, *The Niger Delta: No Democratic Dividend*, October, Vol 14, No 7 (A)
(http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/nigeria3/Nigeria1002.htm#P62_897 - Accessed 27 April 2006).
12. 'Chevron Moves to End Violence in Niger Delta' 2005, *Comtex*, 19 September. (FACTIVA)
13. 'This Day (Nigeria) - AAGM - Communities Give Shell Ultimatum to Complete Projects' 2003, *This Day (Nigeria)* 16 June. (FACTIVA)
14. 'Imo to probe disturbances in Njaba' 2006, *The Tide News*, 14 April.
(<http://www.thetidenews.com/article.aspx?qrDate=04/14/2006&qrTitle=Imo%20to%20probe%20disturbances%20in%20Njaba&qrColumn=SOUTH%20EAST> - Accessed 20 April 2006)
15. 'Nigerian protesters set police station ablaze, free detainees' 2006, *BBC*, 11 April. (FACTIVA)
16. Nkwopara, Chidi 2006, 'Nigeria: Oguta Youths Threaten to Kidnap Oil Workers' *Vanguard (Lagos)*, 28 April. (<http://allafrica.com/stories/200604280045.html> - Accessed 1 May 2006)
17. Odittah, Chuka 2004, 'Imo House Charges Oil Companies', 16 November.
(<http://www.thisdayonline.com/archive/2003/11/11/20031111pol04.html> - Accessed 28 April 2006)
18. 'Nigeria Oil Regions Subject to Brutal Repression, According to Amnesty Report' 2005, *Global Insight Daily Analysis*, 4 November. (FACTIVA)

19. 'Nigerian community claims seven killed at protest on Shell oil rig' 2004, *AFX Asia*, 30 November. (FACTIVA)
20. 'Oil drilling' 2002, *Lloyd's List International*, 19 August. (FACTIVA)
21. 'Seven die, 14 injured in pipeline explosion in Nigeria' 2001, *AFP*, 8 November. (FACTIVA)
22. 'International Campaigns: Nigeria - ERA Monitor Report No. 8: Six Year Old Spillage in Botem-Tai' (undated), *Sierra Club*. (<http://sierraclub.org/human-rights/nigeria/background/spill.asp> - Accessed 1 May 2006)