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ORAL SUBMISSION TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
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AGENDA ITEM 9: Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Mr. Chairperson,

I am making this statement on behalf of the Society for Threatened Peoples International. The World Conference against Racism and Related Intolerance that led to the Durban Declaration and its Programme of Action marked a significant step in the protection of human rights and rightly required States to do more to safeguard the rights of its citizens especially in the light of the growing influence of some non-state actors in the international community.

Nigeria has a choice to make. It either exists to serve and protect the interest of its own citizens or it chooses to protect the corporate interest of multinational oil corporations against its own citizens.

In 2005, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in its concluding observations on Nigeria in respect of the Ogoni situation called on the Nigeria government to take urgent measures to combat "environmental racism" and degradation. In particular, the Committee reiterated that along with the right to exploit natural resources there are specific, concomitant obligations towards the local population, including effective and meaningful consultation.

In same 2005, Nigeria government announced a reconciliation process to facilitate the resolution of the longstanding dispute between the Ogoni People, Shell and the Federal government. By mid last year, in the absence of any genuine dialogue and effective consultation, the government attempted to force a Memorandum of Agreement on the Ogoni people with the intention of returning Shell to the Ogoni oilfields. This attempt to force a Memorandum that had not been discussed with the people was stoutly resisted.

Mr. Chairperson, members of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni people (MOSOP) is facing increasing pressure from the Nigeria Police and other State Security apparati for their principled stand against this attempt to force a memorandum of understanding on the Ogoni people. Our members have been arbitrary arrested while others continue to report of threats of arrests by the Nigeria Police Force. There have also been assassination attempts on the lives of the principal officers of the Movement especially the organisation's Information Officer which had been reported to the special procedures of this council.

In the last one week, instead of the Nigeria government to end the environmental racism that is going on in Ogoni and embrace a meaningful and effective

consultation with the Ogoni people, it has given the greenlight to Shell Petroleum Development Company with the assistance of the Joint Military Task Force established by the Government, to forcefully return to the Ogoni oilfields without any consultation with the Ogoni people which had led to serious violations of human rights as the communities resist this attempt to forcefully return to their area. The violations of the human rights of the Ogoni people and other groups in the Niger Delta hold serious consequences for the stability of the oil rich Niger Delta region and Nigeria as a whole.

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished members of this Council, it is in this light that we are appealing to you to redirect your searchlight on Nigeria with respect to its obligation to the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action especially in areas where vulnerable groups like the Ogoni people co-exist with oil multinationals.

Thank you.

Legborsi Saro Pyagbara