
Nigeria: victory of local communities over Texaco

The Niger Delta, in the southern region of Nigeria, has been the scenario of environmental destruction and human rights abuses related to oil prospection and exploitation. The activity of oil companies like Shell, Mobil, Chevron and NAOC -supported by Nigerian armed corps- is strongly denounced and resisted by local communities (see WRM Bulletins 22 and 23). Local peoples have just achieved a great victory over the powerful US-based Texaco Company, which has been forced to stop its operations in the Delta region. This successful result was obtained as a result of effective protests and direct actions. For example, community members blockaded the Funiwa and North Apoi platforms, cutting production of more than 50,000 barrels per day of the light crude extracted from that area. At the same time, youths attacked Texaco's office in the southern industry hub of Warri.

Texaco is not the only oil multinational which has been forced to put an end to or scale back their operations due to the occupation of flow stations and oil platforms. Last January Shell, the largest producer of oil in the region, was the first to be shut down by non-violent protesters, and nowadays the company is operating at 25% capacity.

Although the oil companies have not yet left the area, opposition is mounting. In December 1998, nearly 500 Ijaw communities and over 200 non-governmental organizations around the world endorsed the Kaiama Declaration, which asked oil multinationals operating in the Niger Delta to voluntarily cease operations in order to seek remedy for the impacts of oil production on communities and their environment.

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