



**International Network for Economic, Social & Cultural Rights**  
**Red Internacional para los Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales**  
**Réseau international pour les droits économiques, sociaux et culturels**

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Rights Union,  
United States*

Julietta Rossi  
Director

211 East 43<sup>rd</sup>. St., Suite  
906  
New York, New York  
10017  
United States  
phone: +1 212.681.1236  
fax: +1 212.681.1241

[info@escr-net.org](mailto:info@escr-net.org)  
[www.escr-net.org](http://www.escr-net.org)

*ESCR-Net is a project of  
the Tides Center*

H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo  
President of Nigeria  
Federal Government of the Republic of Nigeria  
Aso Rock Presidential Villa  
Abuja, Nigeria  
Fax: +234 9 3146347  
[president.obasanjo@nigeria.gov.org](mailto:president.obasanjo@nigeria.gov.org)

H.E. Umaru Musa Yar'Adua  
President-Elect of Nigeria  
Federal Government of the Republic of Nigeria  
[maimaje@yaradua2007.com](mailto:maimaje@yaradua2007.com); [info@yaradua2007.com](mailto:info@yaradua2007.com)

Mr. Sunday Ehindero  
Inspector General of Police  
Federal Government of the Republic of Nigeria  
Force Headquarters  
Loius Edet House  
Shehu Shagari Way, Area 11, Garki, Abuja, Nigeria  
Fax: +234 9 2340422

Governor Sir (Dr.) Peter Odili  
Government House  
Port Harcourt  
Rivers State  
Nigeria  
[gov@riversstatenigeria.net](mailto:gov@riversstatenigeria.net)

24 May 2007

Dear H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, H.E. Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, Mr. Sunday Ehindero, and  
Governor Sir Peter Odili:

We are deeply concerned about recent reports of threats to the lives of members of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). We trust and expect that your government will take immediate action to protect the lives and human rights of all members of MOSOP, particularly Bariara Kpalap, Information Officer; Ledum Mitee, President; and Legborsi Pyagbara, International Advocacy Officer. We also expect that your government will undertake a full investigation of the violence and threats outlined below. Finally, ESCR-Net, as a network of 124 Members from 48 countries, stands with MOSOP in demanding that their human rights are respected and protected, particularly ensuring that the voice of MOSOP, as an important representative of the Ogoni People, is heard and respected in any decisions affecting the Ogoni People.

As reported by MOSOP, we understand that at least four unidentified gunmen broke into the Port Harcourt residence of Mr. Bari-ara Kpalap, the Information Officer of MOSOP at about 2 am on Saturday, May 19, 2007. After beating Baridi Kpalap (Bariara Kpalap's spouse) and harassing of their children at gunpoint, the gunmen departed in the absence of Mr. Kpalap, threatening to return for Mr. Kpalap. This incident was preceded by a few days of threats against the lives of Mr. Kpalap, Mr. Ledum Mitee, and Mr. Legborsi Pyagbara. These incidents were reported to the police and again we emphasize the importance of an immediate and comprehensive investigation.

MOSOP believes that these incidents are potentially targeted at silencing the opposition of MOSOP to the so-called "Ogoni Peace Process" facilitated by Reverend Father Matthew Hassan Kukah. MOSOP lost faith in the Kukah Process when it appeared that Rev. Kukah was advocating a pre-determined outcome that included the return of Shell Oil to Ogoniland. After issuing several statements of concern regarding the imbalances and lack of transparency of the process, including Rev. Kukah's failure to convene a meeting of critical stakeholders, MOSOP formally withdrew from the process in September 2006, calling for the government to replace Rev. Kukah as a facilitator. Instead, at the end of February 2007, MOSOP was forced to challenge media reports credited to Reverend Kukah, in which he allegedly gave the impression that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) would soon be signed between the Federal Government, Rivers State Government, Shell, the UN Environmental Program (UNEP) and the Ogoni People to approve a clean-up of the Ogoni environment by UNEP, with the funding of Shell, and to facilitate Shell's return to the area to commence oil production. More recently, Rev. Kukah was involved in organizing an interdenominational church service, at which a similar Memorandum of Understanding was to be signed, until MOSOP and multiple church leaders intervened. MOSOP has refused to consider any Memorandum, failing an open and sincere dialogue with the government. Similarly, MOSOP is concerned that UNEP will unwittingly support a deeply problematic clean-up effort by Shell, intended primarily to secure an ongoing oil concession without the consent of the Ogoni People.

While MOSOP has continued to insist on its openness to any genuine process of resolving questions involving the Ogoni People, ESCR-Net supports MOSOP in its demands that such a process must be transparent, honest, credible and effectively participatory. ESCR-Net also notes that MOSOP has maintained its advocacy of and adherence to non-violence in its work to secure the human rights of its people, attempting to utilize recognized mechanisms, including the Nigerian judicial system, in its struggle. Finally, in addition to ongoing violations of the Ogoni People's human rights associated with oil operations, ESCR-Net remembers the torture and executions of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, on 10 November 1995, following their non-violent efforts to protect the indigenous Ogoni People from human rights and environmental abuses associated with the oil industry in the Niger Delta. Therefore, we take very seriously the threats against the lives of current leaders of MOSOP, calling on you to take all possible steps to ensure the safety and unimpeded action of these leaders. Finally, we ask you to keep us inform on the measures taken.

Sincerely,  
The International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net),

On behalf of ESCR-Net:



Julieta Rossi  
Director

CC:  
His Excellency Professor George A. Obiozor  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
Embassy of the Federal  
Republic of Nigeria  
3519 International Court, NW  
Washington, DC 20008  
Tel: (202) 986-8414/8415  
Fax: (202) 362-6552  
[gobiozor@nigeriaembassyusa.org](mailto:gobiozor@nigeriaembassyusa.org)

Mr. Emma Okah  
Chief Press Officer  
Rivers State Government  
Government House  
Port Harcourt  
Rivers State  
Nigeria  
[emmaokah@yahoo.com](mailto:emmaokah@yahoo.com)

Ms. Hina Jilani  
Special Representative of the Secretary General for human rights defenders  
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Palais des Nations  
CH-1211 Geneva 10  
c/o Mara Steccazzini: [msteccazzini@ohchr.org](mailto:msteccazzini@ohchr.org)  
Guillaume Pfeiffle: [gpfeiffle@ohchr.org](mailto:gpfeiffle@ohchr.org); [urgent-action@ohchr.org](mailto:urgent-action@ohchr.org)

Ms. Gay McDougall  
Independent Expert on minority issues  
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Palais des Nations  
CH-1211 Geneva 10  
Fax: + 41 22 917 9006  
Switzerland  
c/o Graham Fox : [gfox@ohchr.org](mailto:gfox@ohchr.org)  
Erik Friberg: [efriberg@ohchr.org](mailto:efriberg@ohchr.org)

Mr. Achim Steiner  
Executive Director  
United Nations Environment Program  
United Nations Avenue, Gigiri  
PO Box 30552, 00100  
Nairobi, Kenya  
Fax: (254-20) 7624489/90  
[Achim.steiner@unep.org](mailto:Achim.steiner@unep.org)

Sekou Toure  
Regional Director for Africa  
United Nations Environment Program  
P.O. Box 30552  
Nairobi, Kenya  
Fax 00254 20 624041  
[Sekou.toure@unep.org](mailto:Sekou.toure@unep.org)