

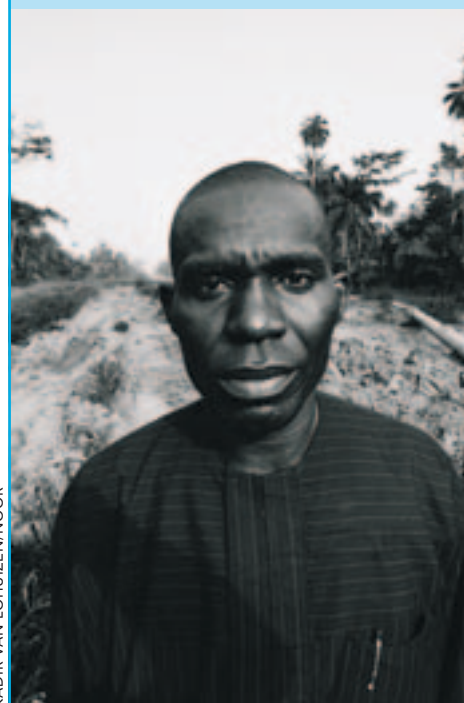
The case Oruma: Spill from a high pressure pipeline

Milieudefensie, its Nigerian sister organisation Environmental Rights Action and four Nigerian fishermen and farmers are holding Shell headquarters in the Netherlands liable for the massive damage that oil spills cause in villages in the Niger Delta of Nigeria – because a Dutch company with a 27 billion dollar annual profit cannot walk away from the consequences of its activities. In this factsheet the case Oruma.

The oil spill damage

On June 26, 2005, a pipeline surveillance company, contracted by Shell, discovered an oil spill from a high pressure pipeline operated by Shell, in Oruma, Bayelsa State. The oil spread into many fish ponds, in which community residents Alali Efanga and Chief Fidelis A. Oguru had grown young fish into thousands of mature fish. All aquatic life in the ponds – next to fish also lobsters, oysters crabs and prawns – died, leaving the community members with little food and income for many years. Around the fish ponds were hundreds of economically valuable trees, which served as a wind shield. Most of these trees (rubber, oil palm, fruit trees and hardwoods such as abara, afarra and mahogany) also died or stopped bearing fruit due to the oil pollution and – surprisingly – due to

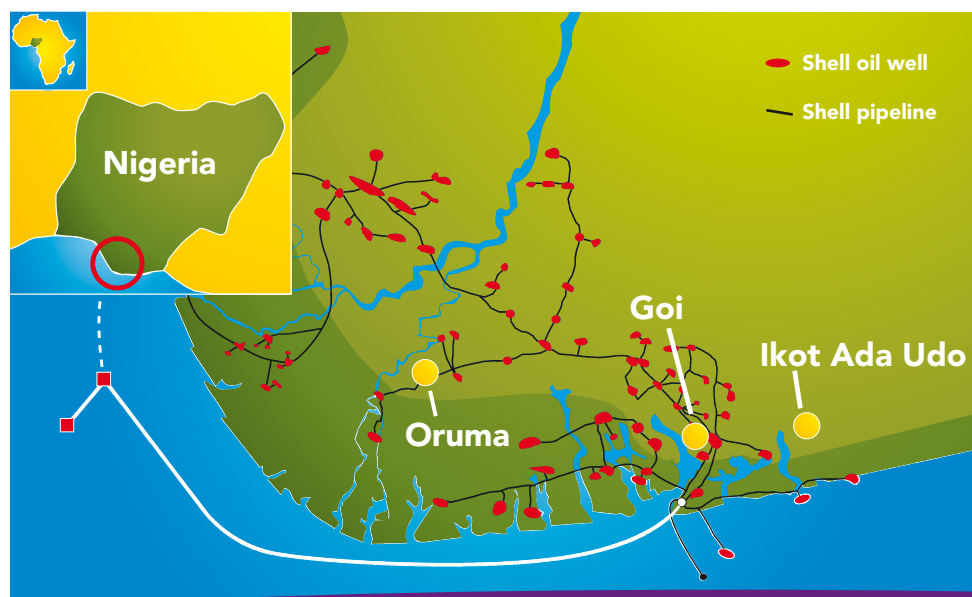
Plaintiff 1:



KADIR VAN LOHUIZEN/NOOR

Alali Efanga Oruma, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

Alali Efanga was born on August 17, 1980 in Oruma. In 2001 Alali inherited the fish ponds from his late father. The ponds would provide him with income. However, an oil spill in June 2005 made the fish ponds useless up til now.





BRIAN SHAAD

Pollution in Oruma

the clean-up operations which took place some months after the spill.

Alali Efanga: "I inherited the fish ponds from my late father. Since the spill I have lost most of my income. Now we live from hand to mouth: sometimes I go into the bush, sometimes a company gives me a day's work for 500 Naira (3 euro)."

Twelve days

The oil spill occurred during the wet season. Rains aided the oil to spread further into the forest and along creeks, finally reaching the Kolo Creek, the community's drinking water supply. Neighbouring communities such as Obedum and Otusega also found oil in the water. During



BRIAN SHAAD

Polluted land in Oruma

the twelve days that the spill lasted, Shell never stopped oil production; oil kept on flowing from the spill source.

The inspection team

On July 7, 2005, a Joint Investigation Team of community members, government offi-

cials and Shell gathered to stop the spill and inspect the cause. After digging some three metres deep, the pipeline became visible to the inspection team and a hole in the lower section was revealed. The community says it was probably corrosion or another type of pipeline failure which caused the leakage. Nigerian law states that oil companies must pay compensation for damages to a community when a spill is caused by an oil company. Shell however has never paid any compensation. It said it would make a computer analysis to reveal the cause of the spill. It would return with the results, but it never did. The results were never made public.

Clean-up?

October/November 2005, some four months after the leakage, a Shell-contractor came to clean up the spill. Dozens of pits were dug – some nearby the fish ponds – in which polluted soil was dumped. These pits were then set on fire,



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Burned pit after clean-up.

which damaged nearby trees. The contractor also set some polluted soil on fire without digging pits first, thereby also burning several trees.

Chief Fidelis: "The clean-up was not properly done and done adversely. After the clean-up, the fish ponds still contained the crude oil whereby all the fishes died."

Still no fish

March 2008, the community residents still had no fish in their ponds.

Plaintiff 2:



KADIR VAN LOUIZEN/NOOR

Chief Fidelis A. Oguru Oruma, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

Chief Fidelis A. Oguru was born on October 10, 1948. He is one of the chiefs of the village of Oruma. Being a retired civil servant, his main income now comes from fishing and farming. He was also badly affected by the oil spill of June 2005.

Chief Fidelis: "Shell-headquarters should pay us compensation for the damaged fish ponds and trees."

Alali Efanga: "We want Shell-headquarters to take its responsibility; that is why we are ready to take this matter to court in the Netherlands."

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