

The Nigerian Federal Executive Council

Introduction to Committee

The Nigerian Federal Executive Council, set in the present day, will consist of the President (the committee chair), the Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Minister of Defense, Minister of Energy (Gas, Petroleum and Power), Minister of Environment, Minister of Finance, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Interior, Minister of Justice, Minister of Labour, Minister of Mines and Steel Development, Minister of Niger Delta, Minister of Science and Technology, and the Minister of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation (more or less depending on the number of delegates in the committee). Each minister is responsible for representing his or her particular subject matter, and when dealing with different problems and crises that arise in committee must make sure that they are working with the interest of their particular federal ministry in mind.

Ministers will have the power to pass directives, press releases, communiqués, as well as resolutions in committee in order to deal with the topics.

History

The current government is headed by Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, a member of the People's Democratic Party. A Niger Delta native, Jonathan was sworn in on May 6, 2010 to replaced Umaru Yar'Adua, who died in office a day prior. Yar'Adua, also a member of The People's Democratic Party member, came into power in 2007.

Like many African nations, Nigeria is home to numerous ethnic and religious groups, and this has contributed to discord in the country since autonomy was granted to the former British colony. Of the more than 250 ethnic groups living in Nigeria, the most influential of these are Hausa and Fulani, Yoruba, Igbo, Ijaw, Kanuri, Ibibio, and Tiv.

Fifty percent (50%) of the population is Muslim, forty percent (40%) are Christian, and ten percent (10%) hold to indigenous beliefs.

Introduction to Topic 1: Niger Delta Crisis

The Niger Delta, located at the southern most end of Nigeria, is the country's main source of oil. This region is of great importance to the financial welfare of Nigeria, however due to unrest in the Niger Delta region oil production has decreased in past years. According to the World Bank, oil accounts for around 95 percent of the country's export earnings and approximately 85 percent of government revenues, thus making it the biggest oil exporter in Africa and one of the world's major oil exporters.

The major presence of the oil industry in the region has caused local groups to protest, oftentimes violently, the impact that it has had on local people and the area surrounding the Niger Delta. The pollution caused by oil production has hurt both the fishing and agriculture industry, thereby hurting people living in the region economically. The main conflict that groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) have with the government is over the share of profits given to local residents, who they believe should be given a greater share of the profits created by the oil production. MEND and other groups have protested the presence of the oil industry in the region by sabotaging pipelines, kidnapping, stealing oil, and attacking oil infrastructure and personnel.

In an attempt to calm the situation, President Umaru Yar'Adua made a declaration of total and unconditional amnesty for armed rebels in the Niger Delta region in June 2009 followed by a declaration of a ceasefire by MEND in October 2009, however in January 2010, the militant group called the short-lived truce off. Shortly after President Jonathan was sworn in following Yar'Adua's death, MEND began pushing him to begin talks to address their demands. Although his administration has begun taking steps to re-launch Yar'Adua's amnesty program, which promises stipends, education and job

opportunities to former gunmen who surrendered their arms, MEND has dismissed the program as they do not believe it addressed their call for greater control of the oil in the Niger Delta.

Introduction to Topic 2: Religious Conflict in Nigeria

The demographics in Nigeria are such that the north is primarily Muslim while the south is primarily Christian. As the juncture between these two religions, the central region of Nigeria has become the frequent victim of oftentimes explosive religious conflict.

Although ethnic and religious differences are one of the most obvious causes for the fighting, the poverty facing all is perhaps a more significant factor in the violent outbursts which leave hundreds dead at a time. Nigeria takes in billions of dollars annually from their oil production in the Niger Delta however few Nigerians benefit from this and most survive on not even a dollar a day.

The violence between the two sects has existed since the 20th century. One of the most significant conflicts occurred in 1967, and the outcome of that conflict was the secession of three eastern states in Nigeria. The new, primarily Igbo Republic of Biafra was reintegrated into Nigeria in 1970 and until 1999 the violence was generally contained as a result of the ruling military regimes. However after civilian control returned to the country in 1999, the bubbling tension erupted once again.

Questions to Consider

- What should be non-negotiable for the Nigerian Federal Executive Council? To what extent should they be willing to negotiate with the militant group?
- What steps must be taken in order to prevent further sabotage and attacks from occurring?
- How should the government address the violence between the Muslim and Christian sects?
- What are the main causes of the violence? How can they be addressed in order to prevent future violence?

Resources for Preliminary Research

- http://234next.com/csp/cms/sites/Next/Home/5570347-146/nigerian_militants_dismiss_renewed_peace_drive.csp
- <http://www.eia.doe.gov/cabs/Nigeria/Background.html>
- <http://www.afriquejet.com/news/africa-news/no-sentiment-about-niger-deltan-as-nigerian-president---mend-2010051249254.html>
- <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/africa/Nigeria%20manages%20change%20of%20guard%20but/-/1066/927444/-/gpudbkz/-/>
- http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gb9wRWhjt_YXDw6pBwa79DyygWcg
- <http://www.rnw.nl/africa/article/26-dead-nigeria-religious-conflict>
- <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1971010,00.html>