

Dutch appeals court orders Shell to pay damages to Nigerian farmers for oil spills



Amsterdam, January 29 (RHC)-- A Dutch appeals court has ruled Shell is responsible for oil spills in 2004 and 2005 in Nigeria's Niger Delta and must pay damages.

The case was brought by Friends of the Earth and Nigerian farmers who were seeking compensation for the leaks that contaminated their land and deprived them of income.

The ruling could lead to more cases against Royal Dutch Shell.

Nigerian environmental justice advocate Nnimmo Bassey, in a tweet welcoming the new ruling, drew attention to the late Ken Saro-Wiwa, who, along with other Ogoni rights activists, was executed by the country's military in 1995 after leading an uprising against Shell's ecological damage in the region.

According to Donald Pols, director of Milieudefensie/Friends of the Earth Netherlands, Friday's ruling represents "fantastic news." He called it "enormous that Shell has to compensate for the damage." Pols said: "This is also a warning for all Dutch transnational corporations involved in injustice worldwide. Victims of environmental pollution, land grabbing, or exploitation now have a better chance to win a legal battle against the companies involved. People in developing countries are no longer without rights in the face of transnational corporations."

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