

Presidential Hopeful Daniel Imperato Comments on Nigerian Court's \$1.5 Billion Judgment Against Shell

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West Palm Beach, Florida – March 14, 2006. Presidential contender Daniel Imperato expressed his concerns on two fronts regarding the decision of a Nigerian court to order Royal Dutch Shell PLC to pay southern communities \$1.5 billion in compensation for environmental pollution and degradation in the Niger Delta.

“On one hand, this decision points out despite the multibillion dollar oil revenues generated in the area, few benefits have accrued to the estimated 20 million people who still live mostly in extreme poverty in the delta. But it also sparks concern about who will get the money and whether it will be used for proper cleanup.”

Shell, in its capacity as the operator of a joint venture group which includes the Nigerian government, France's Total and Italy's ENI will continue to appeal the decision.

Imperato added, “We should be mindful of the positive side of this decision. The pursuit of alternative energy sources gets a boost when oil and gas producers suffer this type of setback.” Led by Egypt and Morocco, the African wind market saw steady growth in 2005, with twice as much wind power installed last year as in 2004.

“However, the other side of the coin is that costs associated with this judgment will ultimately be passed on to the world's oil consumers. That means that the US will see higher costs since we are the world's biggest consumers of oil. Unfortunately, increased prices at the pump will squeeze American workers the most. They are already forced to take food off their tables, and educational tools away from their children, in order to fill their gas tank. That reinforces my campaign point that we need to become energy independent.”

Imperato credits the late Ken Saro-Wiwa, president of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, who led a nonviolent campaign against environmental damage caused by the operations of multinational oil companies, including Shell. The Nigerian author, television producer and environmental activist was hanged in 1995 for his environmental activism by the Nigerian military government of General Sani Abacha, provoking the immediate suspension of Nigeria from the Commonwealth of Nations.

Continuing his skepticism about the distribution of this enormous amount of money, Imperato states, “The is a great opportunity for a major African nation to prove it can support itself with growth, clean up it's environment and educate it's people. It is obvious that the oil economy has not been beneficial to the local working class. If these funds are used correctly, the Nigerians can set an example of unprecedented environmental cleanup, as well as stressing education and health care for their citizens in the region. But none of this will happen unless they are diligent in policing the potential corruption.”

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