



#StopTheSoot Campaign

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A PRESS RELEASE BY THE #STOPTHESOOT CAMPAIGN TEAM

A hybrid group of conscientious, concerned, and dedicated residents of the Port Harcourt metropolitan area, Rivers State, Nigeria has been in the forefront of a campaign to #Stopthesoot, a pervasive cloud of particulate matter from hydrocarbons which has threatened the good health of residents for the past two years. It is commonly referred to as soot.

In a bid to draw attention to local, state, and federal authorities and the general public, a peaceful, non-confrontational Walk was staged on Thursday April 19 2018 from Isaac Boro Park to Government House Port Harcourt, the Department of Petroleum Resources, Moscow Road, and the Rivers State House of Assembly.

At the Government House, the crowd numbering approximately 5000 was addressed by the Deputy Governor, Her Excellency Dr.(Mrs) Ipalibo Banigo. She reassured that the Rivers State Government will not take lightly, anything that threatens the safety and well-being of citizens. She reiterated that Agencies of the Federal Government are the ones entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring safe environmental practices in the oil and gas sector. We submitted a 13-point list of demands which she assured will be looked into by the Governor.

In spite of being informed of our visit in advance, in writing, there was no official to receive us at the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR).

At the Rivers State House of Assembly, we were received by the Chairman of the Committee on Environment, Hon. Christian Ahiakwo. He also assured us that the House of Assembly will look into our demands.

Thereafter, a press briefing was held at the NUJ's Ernest Ikoli Press Centre to round-up the outing.

We take this opportunity to thank the Governor (represented by the Deputy Governor Dr. Ipalibo Banigo), for granting us audience, The Rivers State House of Assembly, The Rivers State Police Command, The State Directorate of the Department of State Services and all officials who ensured that our rights as concerned citizens were not abridged.

We also thank the International and Home-based media, particularly AIT, BBC, VOA, Al Jazeera, Channels TV, TVC, Nigerian Info, Rhythm 93.7, Vanguard, Punch, and particularly our very Special On Air Personnel (AOP) for their support and coverage (gratis) before, during, and after the Walk. We appreciate their continuing support in our health enlightenment phase of the #stopthesoot campaign.