

Contrast VR Releases 'Oil in Our Creeks'

Virtual reality documentary explores the effects of the global oil trade in Nigeria

DOHA, SAN FRANCISCO, LONDON (January 22, 2018) – Contrast VR, Al Jazeera Media Network's immersive studio, has today released the studio's second full-length documentary, *Oil in Our Creeks*.

The film was directed by Contrast VR Editorial Lead Zahra Rasool and co-produced by Rasool and Uzodinma Iweala, author of *Beasts of No Nation*. Sustainability International, a nonprofit working to alleviate poverty and corruption with technology, assisted in production. The film was painted and animated by VR artist Angela Haddad of One Third Blue. *Oil in Our Creeks* is the second film in a series of original documentaries that transport viewers to the people and cultures hit hardest by inequality and conflict.

The documentary follows the story of Lessi Phillips, who was only 16 years old when a Shell pipeline running under the creeks of the Niger Delta burst in her village, pouring oil into the swamps for 77 days. The oil spill devastated the local fisheries and farms, and plunged a once-thriving community into a downward economic spiral. The film follows Phillips through Bodo City almost 10 years later as she shows viewers how the environmental disaster impacted her community, and how the youth work to revive hope.

The film is being launched in partnership with the Nobel Prize-winning human rights organization Amnesty International.

"For decades Shell and other multinational corporations have directly contributed to the devastation of the land and livelihoods of the people who live in the Niger Delta," said Osai Ojigho, Director of Amnesty International Nigeria. "*Oil in Our Creeks* allows viewers to grasp the havoc wrought by oil spills on Niger Delta communities. I urge the companies' executives to watch this film to better understand the community's plight."

"The environmental disaster in the Niger Delta has been reported on for the last 20 years," said Zahra Rasool, Contrast VR's editorial lead. "We wanted to find a new way to retell this important story. We divided the 360-degree screen into 180 degrees of live action footage and juxtaposed the other 180-degree section with animated versions of Lessi's recollections, detailing what the village looked like before the oil spill. We immersed audiences deeper in the story so they could powerfully experience the scale of devastation in the community."

The full-length *Oil in Our Creeks* film is available on Al Jazeera English online, AJ+, Contrast VR, Vimeo, and shared across Amnesty International social channels. The film will also be available on Viveport, Jaunt and Samsung in February 2018.

More information is available at contrastvr.com. See Amnesty's most recent report on Shell's history in the Niger Delta [here](#).

About Contrast VR

Contrast VR is Al Jazeera's immersive media studio, specializing in the production of compelling 360-degree video, augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR) content. The studio also collaborates with existing departments across Al Jazeera Media Network to produce best-in-class 2D and 3D content. Contrast VR produces unique documentaries, videos, and live streams that push the boundaries of narrative storytelling while taking viewers directly to the

front lines of the biggest news events in the world. Learn more about the studio at contrastvr.com.

About Amnesty International

Amnesty International is a Nobel Peace Prize-winning global movement of more than 7 million people who campaign for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all. The organization investigates and exposes abuses, educates and mobilizes the public, and works to protect people wherever justice, freedom, truth, and dignity are denied. Find out more at www.amnesty.org.

Al Jazeera Digital

Amanda Shareghi (in San Francisco)
+1-831-818-2893
shareghia@aljazeera.net

Amnesty International

Ruby Stockham (in London)
+44 (0)20 30 3651 79 (desk), +44 (0)7515897095 (mobile)
ruby.stockham@amnesty.org