Oil clean-up 'scam' warnings ignored by Shell, whistle-blower



investigation has uncovered allegations that energy giant Shell has ignored repeated warnings that a controversial clean-up operation of oil-polluted areas of southern Nigeria has been beset by problems and corruption.

The multinational headquartered in London, along with the Nigerian government, has repeatedly stated that work to clean up oil-contaminated sites of Ogoniland, which kicked off around eight years ago, is going well.But the has discovered evidence that they were warned repeatedly over several years that the scheme, set up by the government and funded by various oil firms to the tune of $1bn (£805m), has been suffering from a string of issues.One close observer has described theclean-up project as a "con" and a "scam" that has wasted money and left the people of Ogonliland in the Niger Delta region continuing.

 to live with the devastating impact of oil pollution - 13 years after a ground-breaking UN report lifted the lid on the seriousness of their situation.Shell told the, "The operating environment in the Niger Delta remains challenging because of the huge scale of illegal activities such as oil theft.When spills do happen from our facilities we clean up and remediate, regardless of the cause. If it's an operational spill, we also compensate people and communities."The allegations come as a civil trial is expected to begin on Thursday at the High Court in London, where lawyers representing two Ogoniland communities of around 50,000 inhabitants will say Shell must take responsibility for oil pollution that occurred between 1989 and 2020, allegedly from its infrastructure.The communities say the spills have left them without clean water, unable to farm and fish, and created serious risks to public health.

Shell, which has been pushing to sell its assets in the West African country to focus on offshore drilling and onshore gas, has indicated it will defend the claims.It denies wrongdoing and says spills in the region have been caused by sabotage, theft and illegal refining for which the company says it is not liable.The has visited the affected areas in the Niger Delta, where Shell, the largest private oil and gas company in the country, discovered the existence of crude oil 68 years ago.The UN says at least 13 million barrels - or 1.5 million tonnes - of crude oil have been spilled since 1958 in at least 7,000 incidents in the Niger Delta region.

The spills have left many families worried for their health and livelihoods.