

Worker killed at Chevron oilfield

II OFOR ALIKE

A Nigerian oil worker was killed and another injured yesterday in an armed attack on a supply ship operated by a United States oil services company, an industry source said.

It was the latest in a string of attacks on oil workers in the world's eighth largest exporter, and comes a day before oil workers are to stage a three-day warning strike over rising insecurity in the Niger Delta.

"Armed men came alongside the vessel in the afternoon and got on board to look for things to take. They executed one of the crew when they didn't find anything," the source said. The supply ship was operated by Edison Chouest Offshore, a Louisiana-based oil services com-

pany, a security source said.

Industry sources say the company has the largest independently owned fleet of seismic and research vessels in the world.

The ship was working on an oilfield about three miles offshore operated by United States energy giant Chevron, but officials from the California-based company were also unavailable to comment.

The field is part of the Escravos oil export system, which normally exports about 160,000 barrels of oil per day.

It is located in the western delta, where a series of attacks and kidnappings earlier this year forced Royal Dutch Shell to evacuate hundreds of workers and reduce output by 477,000 barrels per day.

Oil workers across Nigeria are to stop work for three days from today to pro-

test growing insecurity in the delta, after the killing of another Nigerian oil worker last month. Union officials after meeting government officials yesterday say they may limit the impact of the action on crude output.

Violence in the Niger Delta, home of Africa's biggest oil industry, has been a problem for over a decade. Many in the vast wetlands region resent the oil industry which provides the bulk of Nigeria's wealth but has brought few benefits to them.

Poverty fuels militancy among youths who live in villages with no clean water, electricity, schools, doctors or jobs.

Violence is worsened by other factors such as the lure of ransoms, the struggle for control of oil smuggling and use of militias by local politicians seeking to maintain their grip on power.