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## Army recaptures Nigerian oil base

**Nigeria's army has recaptured an oil platform occupied by militants since Sunday after a gun battle, it says.**

Military sources say 12 militants, two civilians and a soldier were killed in the operation, which last for hours.

Nine civilian hostages were rescued in the operation, army commander Lawrence Ngubane told the BBC.

Italian firm Eni, which operates the platform, had said that about 28 people had been taken hostage - the reason for the discrepancy is not clear.

Brig Gen Ngubane refused to comment on the casualty figures but said the army was in "full control" of the platform.

The BBC's Abdullahi Kaura Abubakar in the Niger Delta said local villagers had fled the area in case they were caught up in heavy fighting.

The army had sent in troops reinforcements and four gunboats ahead of the battle.

President Umaru Yar'Adua pledged to try and bring peace to Nigeria's oil region when he took office last month.

### 'Injustice'

Last week, militant leader Mujahid Dokubo-Asari was freed from prison on bail on health grounds after spending almost two years in custody on treason charges.

His release had been one of the main demands of the armed groups who have staged attacks on oil installations in the Niger Delta.

He has since urged his followers not to take hostages.

"We are fighting injustice, we should not do injustice to other people," he said on his return to the main oil city, Port Harcourt.

But there are many different



The benefits of oil are not flowing to local people, say militants

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armed group in the region - some with political demands for more of Nigeria's oil wealth to be used to help local people, others criminal, seeking ransom payments from foreign oil companies.

Southern militants are fighting to retain oil wealth in their region

Our reporter says no group has claimed responsibility for the seizure of the Ogboinbiri platform in Bayelsa State.

Nigeria is Africa's biggest oil producer but most of its people live in poverty.

The violence in the Niger Delta has led to a 25% cut in Nigeria's output, costing about \$4bn last year.

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