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Abducted Britons and Colombian freed in Nigeria

Three Britons and a Colombian kidnapped last week in Nigeria's Delta region have been freed, local police say.

Gunmen snatched the group, who were working for oil giant Shell, near the city of Port Harcourt last Tuesday, killing a Nigerian guard.

A police spokeswoman told the AFP news agency all four were "looking okay" but did not say if a ransom had been paid.

The oil-producing region is notorious for kidnappings by militants, who demand a greater share of its wealth.

But the Delta has been relatively calm since most major militant groups agreed to lay down their arms last year after the government offered an amnesty.

But the BBC's Caroline Duffield in Lagos says that with President Umaru Yar'Adua in a hospital in Saudi Arabia, no-one has been steering the amnesty process.

Many militants say the government has not fulfilled its promises. Our correspondent says there are signs that the hard-won lull in violence is now under strain.

Shot dead

"All kidnapped victims - the three Britons and the Colombian - have been released this evening," Nigerian police spokeswoman Rita Abbey was quoted as saying by AFP.

The four workers have not been identified.

They were attacked by unidentified gunmen last Tuesday morning as they made their way to work at a power plant, police said.

Their police escort was shot dead and the driver was also believed to have been shot.

A police search in and around the town of Aba, some 30 miles (50km) north-east of Port Harcourt, followed.

At the time, Shell expressed concern for the safety of its contractor



Militants say they are fighting for the rights of local people

NIGERIA - TROUBLED GIANT

DEADLY DELTA



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