

News Front Page



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Abducted Britons and Colombian freed in Nigeria

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GER DELTA

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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.

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

But the Delta has been relatively calm since most major militant

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.



Militants say they are fighting for the rights of local people

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

NIGERIA - TROUBLED GIANT

DEADLY DELTA



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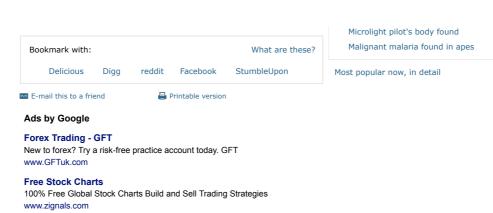
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2 sur 2