

## **Soldiers Raid Villages, Harass Local Residents**

On Tuesday, October 3, 2006, Niger Delta militants killed 11 soldiers accompanying an oil Barge carrying fuel and other supplies to Shell facilities in the cawthorne channel area, an Ijaw enclave in Rivers State.

The mainstream militant formation, Joint Revolutionary Council (JRC), an assemblage of the reformed Nigeria Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), Martyrs Brigade and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) claimed responsibility for the attack and series of coordinated attacks on oil facilities and the military all over the delta.

The militants are faceless and operate as a guerrilla network. Angry Nigerian troops destroyed villages in the creeks and harassed innocent residents traveling along the waterways. A CEHRD monitor, Katherine Houreld, the Nigerian Correspondent of the Associated Press (AP), Soni Daniel of the Punch Newspaper and a photographer of AP were harassed by the Nigerian troops patrolling the creeks. The Nigerian soldiers on sighting the team along the Abonnema creeks in Rivers State started firing "warning gunshots". But, the team was not hurt, but intimidated and frightened. Others complained of such military recklessness.

The militant grouping is calling for the immediate release of Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari, the detained leader of NDPVF. Nigeria is Africa's biggest oil producer and 5th world supplier of oil to the United States. They are also demanding for more control of the oil wealth for residents of the area, since corruption and mismanagement by the government and its officials never allowed the wealth to trickle down to the rural communities and people whose land produce the wealth.

Most of the militants were recruited by politicians to rig the 2003 poll and to kill, maim and intimidate their rivals. They later acquired more arms and ammunitions from oil bunkering, kidnapping and hostage taking, and organized crimes to sustain their arms supply and sustenance.

CEHRD is worried that due to corruption in government coupled with massive proliferation of dangerous Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) by the militants the violence will still continue.