

British Oil Worker, Others Killed in Oil Violence

Mr. David Hunt, a 58-year-old British national and father of 2 children and 5 grandchildren who hailed from Middlesborough in Britain, was killed in an intense gun battle between the armed Youths and members of the Nigerian Navy off the Bony Island in the Bony Local Government Area of Rivers State.

About 10 Youths armed with assault rifles and explosives had stormed an oil vessel-Floating Production Storage and off loading (FPSO)-mystras, a crude oil floating production system with storage and loading capacities. The facility is jointly managed by SBM and SAIPEM (a subsidiary of ENI), and stationed on the Okono field. The facility was said to have had 83 crew members, 25 of them were non Nigerians.

The armed Youths had taken seven foreign oil workers hostage and was about leaving when a gun battle ensued between them and the Navy. In the process, David Hunt was killed in the Cross fire, a soldier and two youths were also reportedly killed in the violence. One of the hostages, Caputa Pitro, an Italian, sustained serious gun injuries. He was flown abroad for medical treatment. The hostages were later released by their captors.

CEHRD learnt that the armed youths are not part of the mainstream militant formation in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, The Joint Revolutionary Council (JRC) and its affiliates, the Martyrs Brigade, the reformed Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), calling for the release of Dokubo-Asari, the detained leader of the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF).

Rather the Youths who struck at the facility recently belong to the fringe groups which kidnap foreign oil workers and collect ransoms to set them free.