

Militants bomb VP-elect's home

DENNIS NAKU, Yenagoa

ESCALATING militancy in oil-rich Niger-Delta region yesterday assumed a frightening dimension, when unidentified gunmen bombed and destroyed the country home of vice-president-elect Goodluck Jonathan in Otuoke, Bayelsa State, killing four policemen.

Similarly, an explosion rocked Barrat Hotel in the state capital Yenagoa, said to be owned by deputy speaker of the state assembly, Bright Ewure, on Tuesday night, causing pandemonium as people ran for their lives.

In Port Harcourt, Rivers State capital, a child whose identity is yet to be established as at press time was said to have been abducted by unknown gunmen.

Police said Jonathan's house was partially destroyed and that the attackers also blew up a nearby police station leading to the death of two policemen.

Jonathan's relation, Mr Nume Johnson, however, was lucky as he escaped the attack. He was seriously injured and is currently receiving medical attention in Yenagoa after youths rescued him from the

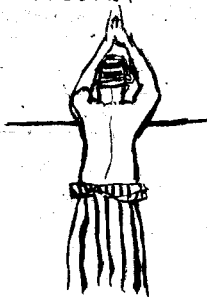
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•4 policemen killed
•Explosion rocks Yenagoa

Jonathan

COUNTRYMAN

NO DEMOCRACY YET IN
NIGERIA—CRITIC



ONLY BABA-CRACY

Jonathan's bombed home in Otuoke, Ogbia, Bayelsa State

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vice president-elect's country home.

No group has claimed responsibility so far for the attack.

Jonathan was not in the house at the time of the attack, but Nigeria Police spokesman, Haz Iwendi said of the attack:

"We know they are from one of the militant groups operating in the Niger Delta but we don't know from which group. We lost two officers in the attack."

Meanwhile, gunmen have taken a child from a house in an affluent part of Port Harcourt, the oil region's capital. Police say they are combing the area.

Armed men arrived at Jonathan's house in Otuoke village in Ogbia local government area in the south of the state in two speedboats at about 2.00 a.m local time yesterday, according to Iwendi.

"The parents of the vice president-elect, who were in the house, were saved by policemen and the house has been partially destroyed."

Recall that Govt. House, Yenagoa was similarly attacked by unidentified militants on the eve of last month's presidential election although the police said yesterday they have not established any link between the two incidents.

It was not clear why the militants attacked, but people believe that they might be trying to remind incoming President Umaru Yar'Adua that the crisis in the region was far from over.

During yesterday morning's attack on Jonathan's country home, a Mobile Police corporal was shot dead while trying to escape from the invading militia in the governor's residence just as the Ogbia police station located few meters away from the scene was razed down and three policemen attached to the post including an inspector were shot dead.

Daily Champion found that the late police corporal was deployed from Yenagoa to the governor's village residence only last Sunday.

Militants reportedly launched the attack shortly after midnight, from a nearby river linking Ogbia main town. They completely destroyed Gov. Jonathan's personal room in a one storey building housing files and books, eye witnesses told *Daily Champion*.

In the other case, an explosion rocked Eraware's Barrat Hotel about 7.30 pm the previous day, causing pandemonium in the densely populated Biogbolo area, near Yenagoa.

When *Daily Champion* visited the scene yesterday, few security personnel were spotted in the once imposing, but now badly damaged edifice overlooking the waterside. The bandits were reported to have arrived the area in about four speed boats and armed with sophisticated weapons.

Some villagers who spoke to our reporter said they heard sound of an explosion close to the governor's residence, saying a second sound stronger than the first was also heard, while they were trying to decipher the source of the sound. Thereafter pandemonium broke loose.

In a swift reaction, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan stated that the attack was a minor one, saying it was politically motivated rather than the Niger Delta agitation.

The vice-president-elect, who said this while declaring open a three-day capacity building workshop for defence

Militants

correspondents at the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) secretariat in Yenagoa further stated that it was the price he had to pay for the survival of democracy.

A security detail attached to the Otuoke house told newsmen that he and his colleagues escaped being killed by the dynamite thrown into the compound by the vigilance of one colleague of theirs who alerted others and they escaped through "the front gate."

But, obviously not satisfied with the impact of the first explosive thrown from the speed boats, the bandits

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However, attempts to elicit information from three of his four wives and three daughters hit the rock as they insisted that embargo has been placed on them not to talk to anybody about their husband's and father's death.

According to them, tradition does not allow them to talk to people on any matter bothering on the demise of their father, stressing however, that their eldest son, Obiajulu, who is now in United States is the only competent person to talk on the matter.

However, one of the daughters, Obiamaka Maduagwu who spoke tacitly with tears said that the news of the death of their father threw everybody in the family into

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correspondents, the special assistant to the president on public affairs, Mallam Uba Sani said that the call was not in the interest of the country since the elections had been held and winners had not only emerged, but also had been presented with their certificates of return.

"The call is coming at a time most members of the opposition and foreign governments have congratulated the president-elect and are desirous that Nigeria should forge ahead. The call is a clear attempt to return Nigeria to the better-forgotten dark years", he stated.

The opposition acting under the umbrella of Nigerians United for Democracy (NUD), had Tuesday restated its rejection of the April general election results and insisted on the setting up of an ING that would "plan, organize and conduct credible elections to salvage the failed democracy

Yar'Adua: SSS n

BALA NASIR, Katsina

IN what appears to be a clash of the titans, men of the State Security Services (SSS) attached to the president-elect, Alhaji Umaru Yar' Adua yesterday engaged in a free for all with the palace guards belonging to

Appeal Court refers Ladoja

MALACHY UZENDU, HEAD EDITORIAL, Abuja

COURT of Appeal, Abuja yesterday referred the suit in which Senator Rashidi Ladoja, Oyo State governor is seeking the extension of his tenure of office, to the State's Elections Tribunal.

The case was referred to the tribunal sequel to an application brought by lawyer to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Mr. Joe-Kyari Gadzama (SAN), challenging the jurisdiction of the court to entertain Ladoja's suit.

Gadzama had urged the court