

# 1 killed as militants kidnap 6 Russians, 1 Briton

DENNIS UDOMA, Uyo

**N**IGER-Delta crisis deepened weekend, as militants kidnapped six Russians, a Briton and three other men in separate operations in Ikot Abasi and Port Harcourt.

The six Russians were kidnapped from an aluminium firm and a driver attached to

one of the firms; Group Five, shot dead.

Russian envoy in the country confirmed the kidnap, saying they have requested the Nigerian government to take urgent steps to secure the men's release.

The abducted men are staff of Russia Aluminium (RUSAL).

They were kidnapped after their apartment was blown up with explosives.

In the latest spate of kidnappings, gunmen also late Friday seized the workers from the premises of oil services company Schlumberger in Port

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Harcourt, the police said.

"We can confirm that one Briton has been kidnapped from the Schlumberger Anadrill Field Compound in Port Harcourt," a foreign office spokesman said.

The foreign office had no further details on the Briton's identity.

Diplomats in Nigeria said earlier the seized workers had British, Dutch, French, and Pakistani nationality.

Hours after the new kidnappings, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the region's most prominent armed group, freed six foreign hostages and announced a month-long moratorium in attacks on petroleum sites.

It was not clear which group carried out the latest attack on the compound of an aluminium-smelting

# Militant

plant belonging to Russia Aluminium (RUSAL), the world's largest aluminium producer.

"They blew up their victims' apartments with dynamite before taking them away", Felix Nxong, general manager of the plant, said.

More than 200 foreigners have been kidnapped since militants increased their attacks in late 2005, with more than 100 foreign workers taken this year alone, the *Associated Press* reported.

More than two dozen foreigners are currently thought to be in captivity. Eleven were captured in two separate incidents last Friday. President Yar'Adua has said tackling the unrest in the south is one of his top priorities.