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Countryman

LANDSLIDE THREATENS
STATES — NEWS



N/Delta: 2 killed as youths clash with JTF

CHINEDU WOSU, *Port Harcourt*

At least two persons were confirmed dead and scores of others injured in skirmishes between youths of Ahoada in Rivers State with operatives of the joint military task force (JTF) deployed to the community.

Communal strife erupted on Tuesday night when youths of Ochegba community barricaded the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) oil location and prevented repair works on a pipeline, precipitating a clash with the soldiers on site.

Daily Champion gathered that the JTF operatives on location was forced to open fire on the protesters who blocked the company premises, killing two youths and injuring others.

Our correspondent also learnt that most of the injured persons are lying critically ill in hospital.

Commenting on the killings a spokesman in Ochegba said the soldiers shot at the youths while "peacefully" protesting alleged insensitivity and neglect suffered by the community in the hands of Shell.

The community spokesman, who did not want his names in print, decried the attitude of oil operators in the region, just as he said Ochegba people suffered neglect and marginalisation in the hands of operators.

Contacted for comments on the development at Ahoada, JTF spokesman in Rivers state. Maj. Musa Sagir confirmed the incident but said the soldiers shot at the protesters to disperse them.

Sagir also said the soldiers were at Ochegba community to secure the oil installation undergoing repairs works by the SPDC and, therefore, could not

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have allowed protesters to attack the installation.

The Army image-maker did not disclose the identities of the two deceased persons whose corpses had been deposited in a mortuary in the area.

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