

Pirates kill oil worker in Bonny

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PIRATES killed one person and seriously injured a second in an attack on a crew boat operated by ExxonMobil, an industry source said on Tuesday.

One crew (member) was killed and one seriously injured," said a source who pleaded not to be quoted.

The nationality of the crew members is not known, a British Broadcasting Corporation's report said.

The source said the incident

happened offshore from Onne, Rivers State.

Attacks of oil platforms amid kidnapping by militants have become a common occurrence in the oil-rich Niger Delta.

Nigeria, Africa's largest crude exporter has suffered 26 pirate attacks so far this year, up from nine in the same period last year, the London-based International Maritime Bureau said on Tuesday.

The IMB said the poorly policed waters of Nigeria and Somalia had pushed world record by 14 per cent in the first

nine months of 2007.

A Nigerian navy spokesman, Capt. Henry Babalola, said criminals were now targeting the most vulnerable vessels — shipping trawlers — because authorities have cracked down on crude oil theft.

The pirates also seize valuable communications gear, according to the Cable Network News.

The IMB said Southeast Asia's Malacca Strait, one of the world's busiest waterways, had been relatively quiet with 198 attacks on ships reported

between January and September, up from 174 in the same period in 2006.

Reported attacks in Somalia rose rapidly to 26 up from eight a year earlier, the IMB said.

"The seafaring industry is very concerned about this," said Cyrus Mody, a senior analyst with IMB. "There is absolutely no regard for law in that area. Not only is it not good for business in Africa, but it blocks humanitarian aid and is bad for the general stability of the continent."