

Militants kill 9 Naval men

• *Not true – JTF*

NINE personnel of the Nigerian Navy were reported killed and four civilians injured yesterday in an attack on a security vessel in the Niger Delta.

It is the second attack by armed militants in 24 hours.

Reacting to the incident last night, spokesman for the Joint Military Task Force (JTF), Lt. Col. Musa Sagir said nobody was killed.

He said the raid by the militants was foiled. He spoke with *Daily Champion* in an interview.

"Another supply vessel working for Addax Petroleum, the Seacor Macor, was attacked early this morning," Sagir told AFP.

He said the incident happened at Addax's Anthan oilfield near the High Island rig.

A spokesman for Addax Petroleum Nigeria could not immediately confirm the attack.

Tuesday's attack came a day after a member of the Nigerian navy was killed and four other Nigerian seamen injured when gunmen travelling in two speedboats attacked an Addax security vessel some 40 kilometres from the Nigerian coast.

Addax Petroleum Nigeria is an affiliate of Geneva-based Addax and Oryx Group, an international oil and gas

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exploration company focused on West Africa and the Middle East.

The firm has grown by acquiring underdeveloped oil blocks in Nigeria and by December 2007 had 319 employees in Nigeria, out of a total 733 worldwide. No group has so far claimed responsibility for both attacks.

Oil companies and their personnel are being increasingly targeted by armed groups who have stepped up kidnappings and sabotage in the region in the past two years.

Last month, Nigeria's most prominent militant

Militants

group, the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta or MEND, attacked an oil pipeline run by Royal Dutch Shell in the Delta and claimed to have killed 11 soldiers in the attack.

The MEND emerged in 2006 as the leading group calling for a greater share of Nigeria's oil revenue for the Delta region.

Nigeria's daily production has been cut by about a quarter because of the attacks and it was overtaken as Africa's largest producer by Angola in April, according to Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) figures.