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Countryman

EFCC: I WILL STEP ON TOES
— MRS WAZIRI



THAT MEANS YOU MAY
PROCEED TO SCHOOL
VERY SOON

Soldiers raid militants' hideouts

•1 killed, 69 arrested

Dennis Naku, Yenagoa and Chinedu Wosu, P/Harcourt

OPERATIVES of the Joint Military Task force (JTF), yesterday raided some villages in the Niger Delta, killing a 45-year-old man, Ayakeme Miebakedo, and arresting 69 others.

During the invasion of Bolorna, Sagbama local government area of Bayelsa State, another suspect was shot while attempting to escape.

JTF spokesperson, Lt.-Col. Sagir Musa confirmed the arrest to newsmen in Yenagoa, saying the incident occurred during a search carried out on Bolorua community.

The suspects were among the people alleged to be responsible for the kidnapping of the aged father of the state accountant general, Pa Anderson Zidafamor, who was subsequently released.

Pa Zidafamor was kidnapped last year by some suspected militant youths and the JTF had since been on their trail.

Musa said that his men swooped on the community while acting on a tip off and arrested the two suspects while the other one was shot while trying to escape but could not say whether he was alive or dead.

But a source in the affected community told *Daily Champion* that the soldiers invaded the area yesterday by 3 am in a commando style, thereby throwing the rustic community into a state of disorder.

Musa said after cordoning and searching Abuja, Bundu, Makoba and Ibadan waterfronts, troops of the JTF arrested 69-nine suspects, recovered 8 AK47 rifles, 5 locally made pistols, 3 dane guns, 6 empty magazines, two magazines loaded with 10 rounds of ammunition, 4 sledge hammers, 2 Motorola radios and some quantity of a white substance, believed to be cocaine.

He said other intelligence reports reaching the JTF had revealed that some militant groups, having suffered heavy human losses in recent encounters, have started entering the city to recruit new army among the youths of the state.

He said they are doing this "to replace their lost colleagues with the intent to polarize the state", adding "Abuloma, Amadi-Ama and other areas have been identified as mobilization centers".

He revealed that the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) plans to attack security positions in the state as well as use foreign hostages in its custody as human shield and get them killed in the process.

"Another information at the disposal of the JTF has it that MEND plans to use four expatriate hostages in its custody as human defense shields during an attack they have planned to launch against our men. In the process, among whom are a Briton and an American get them killed and blame the JTF for their death", he said.

Musa however, assured the people of the state that security operatives in the region have the situation under control, having put adequate measures in place to counter any aggression from lawless elements of society.

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