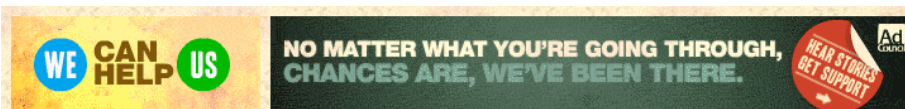


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**Nigeria: Soldiers, Militants in Shoot-Out in Delta, Bayelsa**

18 November 2010

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Booming sounds of guns and artillery rent the air in the creeks of the Niger Delta yesterday, as soldiers and militants engaged in a duel in Delta and Bayelsa states.

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The joint military taskforce (JTF) said yesterday it was carrying out operations in Delta and Bayelsa, two of the main oil-producing states, to flush out criminals.

"At the moment we have ongoing operations in several locations simultaneously," JTF spokesman Timothy Antigha said, but added he could not immediately give any further details.

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Panic has gripped many residents of the area following the latest offensive.

Last week, eight persons died as soldiers and militants battled to take control of the camp in Foropa. During the exchange of gunfire which lasted several hours, weapons and maps of oil installations were seized.

The military had earlier alerted about the attacks: "We have observed with concern some criminal acts within the past few days by some people claiming to be militants. Many of these criminals are known to be hiding in camps within the creeks of the Niger Delta," Chief of Defence Staff Oluseyi Petinrin said in a statement.

"These camps will no longer be tolerated. To avoid any collateral damage, we are seizing this opportunity to instruct all law-abiding citizens who live around the vicinity of these camps to leave immediately," the statement said.

JTF said on Tuesday it has launched full military action in the Niger Delta, with the aim of flushing out those it described as "criminal elements" in the region.



Vanguard

Antigha in a statement forwarded to Daily Champion in Yenagoa said there was no going back on the drive to flush out militants in the area.

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"The JTF is currently in an operation to rid the Niger Delta of these criminal elements, in order for the region to experience the needed peace and security which are imperatives for sustainable development.

"All law abiding indigenes of communities hosting these criminals are advised to remain clam and promptly report suspicious characters to relevant military authorities."

Meanwhile, MEND has said the attack on the Exxon Mobil facility located at Ibene in Akwa Ibom state was carried out by its fighters.

In a statement signed by its spokesperson, Gbomo Jomo and forwarded to our correspondent, the group said the attack lasted for two hours "after our fighters, detonated explosives they had earlier rigged to this facility, causing considerable damage."

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Author: Effiong

Fri Nov 19 11:27:05 2010

May the good lord help Nigeria. It is scary looking at these faceless militants in hoods. Since when has our people became this tough fighters and terrorists. The Govt. must disarm these people who may be just looking for a quick money to feed their families. Govt. must also find where these people are getting the sophisticated looking weapons. This so-called militants should stop disgracing Nigeria and our loving President who is from their State. The President should be given a chance to help Niger Delta region, and speed up the amnesty program already in progress.

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