

5 killed as militants, JTF clash in Rivers

Five people were confirmed killed yesterday in Bonny, Rivers State when militants attacked a naval gun boat guarding oil installations in the volatile Niger Delta region. No known militant group operating in the Niger Delta has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Local sources said more than 30 militants attacked the naval boat protecting oil facilities belonging to Shell Petroleum Development Company, and in the ensuing gun fight, three militants were killed while a naval officer and a civilian also lost their lives.

The spokesman of the Joint Task Force (JTF), Lt Col Segie Idoro who confirmed

From Henry Omuu,
Port-Harcourt

the attack said the militants struck at 2 am and that the naval men responded in self defence, adding that the resultant two-hour gun battle left "three attackers, a naval officer and a civilian dead". Meanwhile, pirates raided a Norwegian vessel yesterday close to Port-Harcourt, the Rivers State capital.

According to sources the vessel was manned by 22 crew members, all Indian nationals. Our correspondent learnt from sources that the pirates raided the 53,000 dead weight tonnes freighter named, *Sper Gemeni* in the early hours of Tuesday.