

targets both whites, and blacks and not necessarily oil company workers. Kidnappers now target close family members of politicians, top businessmen and women, the clergy, and traditional rulers. Several prominent persons have died in the hands of kidnappers, others a paid ransom to regain their freedom.

While kidnapping civilians for monetary purposes holds sway in Bayelsa State, another insecurity issue that is prevalent in the state in recent years is armed attacks on police and military outposts and checkpoints. Though these attacks are more common in the hinterlands, there have also been attacks in the Yenagoa metropolis, sometimes as reprisals in retaliation for military or police brutality, or to collect firearms from them. According to Eziukwu (2015), an attack by sea pirates on a Joint Task Force base in Nembe on July 31, 2015, left four military personnel and a policeman dead along the waterways in Nembe community. Similarly, Akasike and Utebor, (2016) reported that on Tuesday, May 11, 2016, three soldiers attached to the Military Joint Task Force in the Niger Delta, (Operation Pulo Shield) were attacked and killed by suspected militants at Foropa in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. They noted that the gunmen, who operated in a speedboat, overran a military outpost at Foropa and shot three soldiers dead.

Again, in what appears to be a resumption of violent activities in the Niger Delta following the emergence of the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), militants attacked and killed four soldiers and a civilian in the Ekeremor waterways in Bayelsa State on Monday, 28 August 2017. Most recently, Abisoye, (2020) reporting for Sahara Reporters, also noted that some armed militants laid ambush on the soldiers along the waterways of Letugbene in Ekeremor local government area of Bayelsa State. The soldiers and their civilian boat driver were killed during the attack. The military carried out reprisal attacks on the community and burnt down houses and other properties belonging to the people of the community. Similarly, on Sunday, February 16, 2020, Nigerian troops were again ambushed by unknown gunmen, and four soldiers were killed “while carrying out their routine duty within its area of responsibility”. This prompted the Commander, Operation Delta Safe along with the Commander, 16 Brigade and Commander, Sector 2 of the Nigerian Army in Bayelsa state to pay a visit to Letugene, Beneside, Ogbotobo, and Tunu. Bilabiri community also came under military raids in