

# Six youths, soldier feared dead in Bayelsa clash

**S**IX youths and a soldier were feared dead along the waterways of Ekeremor Local Council of Bayelsa State during a gun battle between some youths allegedly drawn from Delta and Bayelsa and the security team in the oil-rich region.

The youths were said to be on a mission to rescue some indigenous oil workers of Shell Petroleum

Development Company (SPDC) held hostage in Ekeremor.

The service of the youths, according to sources, was engaged by a known militant leader, who is believed to be sympathetic to the Delta State government, and was out to prove a point by rescuing the workers without negotiating with their kidnappers.

*From  
Willie Etim, Yenegoa*

The shoot-out was said to have resulted from a communication breakdown when the youths ran into a truckload of men of the Joint Military Task Force (JTF), who reportedly opened fire on the boats carrying the youths.

Six of the youths were said to have been killed on

the spot, while one of the two soldiers who sustained injuries died later. The other was rushed to a hospital in Warri, Delta State.

The remains of the slain youths were reportedly dumped at Peretrugbene community, a boundary town between Delta and Bayelsa. Eight soldiers were said to be in the truck when the incident

occurred.

When *The Guardian* contacted the Public Relations Officer of the Joint Task Force, Maj. Mohamed Said, he explained that on Friday last week, the JTF received a report that hostage-takers and some criminals were hiding in Biobou community in Ekeremor. On the strength of the information, he said they launched a raid on the

community through their cordon and search process.

He said no casualties were recorded during the confrontation, as "only arrest was made."

Special Adviser to the Bayelsa State Governor on Security Matters, Maj. Andrew Oputa (rtd), confirmed the incident but said he could not speak on the incident as he was yet to receive the details.