

# Militants kill five soldiers in Rivers

**A**FTER a long lull, the weapons of violence in the hands of suspected Niger Delta militants boomed once again yesterday.

By the time the dust cleared, five soldiers were confirmed dead and about 25 contractors of the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) were declared missing at an oil facility near Bilie in Rivers State.

Sources told *The Guardian* that up to 14

## • 25 Shell contractors missing

soldiers may actually have died in the attack.

A group, the Joint Revolutionary Council (JRC), has claimed responsibility for the attack. It demanded the unconditional release

*From Kelvin Ebiri,  
Port Harcourt*

from detention of militant leader, Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari of the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force

(NDPVF).

But the more popular militant group, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), last night dissociated itself from the attack and

the "philosophy" behind it.

MEND, however, declined explaining what it meant by the philosophy of the JRC's action.

The JRC threatened that if its demands were not met in good time, it would unleash further attacks on the interests and agents of the Nigerian state as well as her "imperialist collaborators."

The attack was a classic  
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## Govt may restrict Fayose's movement as rallies hold in Ado-Ekiti

**I**NDICATIONS emerged yesterday that the Federal Government may have restricted the movement of Governor Ayo Fayose to the State House, Ado-Ekiti.

The restriction, according to sources, follows security reports that some people are planning to foment trouble by attacking the homes and families of legislators who

*By Mustapha Ogunsakin  
(Lagos) and  
Ifedayo Sayo (Ado-Ekiti)*

had served him and his deputy, Mrs. Abiodun Olujimi, with notices of impeachment.

However, the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Mr. Idowu Adelusi, denied the restriction story.

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## Ki-Moon wins straw

## NEWS

# Militants kill soldiers in Rivers

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case of "shock and awe," according to the spokesman of the 2nd Amphibious Brigade, Major Musa Sagir.

Sagir told *The Guardian* that in a surprise attack, about 70 suspected militants stormed the vessel carrying essential materials such as diesel and food items and opened fire on the soldiers guarding it.

The Public Relations Officer of the Brigade said that the gunmen, who stormed the facility in several speedboats, fired indiscriminately at the soldiers and sank the barge.

According to him, about 15 soldiers were on duty when the gunmen attacked.

He said: "It was an ambush and they were able to sink the boat. We had 15 men on duty when the attack took place. The militants later escaped after the dastardly attack."

The Army spokesman further explained that a

search-and-rescue operation was on as at press time. He, however, declined to disclose the number of soldiers rescued alive.

A source in Shell, who pleaded anonymity, disclosed to *The Guardian* that about 25 contractors working for the company, who were on board the vessel, were still missing as at last night.

The spokesperson of the JRC, Cynthia Whyte, in a statement yesterday, said that the group's action was to pressurize the government to immediately release Dokubo-Asari or risk more precision attacks.

Whyte said: "JRC (members) have once again demonstrated their ability to call to naught the insincerity and dubiousness of the corrupt Nigerian state."

It continued: "The key victims of this confrontation were soldiers who at one time or the other, attacked our communities

and assaulted our people. This judgment will be continued, on-going and sustained. We will scale up this campaign with every show of insincerity on the part of the Nigerian state and those that lord over it."

Whyte explained that as combatants who recognised the need to respect the rules of engagement, the group resisted the urge to smoothly take out all the soldiers.

He added that those who felt the temptation to test "our might were rewarded by the fatal venom of our bullets. This is just the beginning."

The militants' spokesperson continued: "We demand once again the unconditional release from the gallows of the Nigerian state, the flagbearer and leading light of the Ijaw and Niger Delta struggle, Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari. If this demand is not met in good time, we will roll out the drums of war and our heroic and patriot-

ic combatants will begin a revolution against all interests and agents of the Nigerian state as well as her imperialist collaborators."

Exasperated by the continued kidnap of oil workers, particularly expatriates, President Olusegun Obasanjo had recently ordered troops deployment in the Niger Delta.

The Army authorities have, however, explained that their men are restrained from engaging the militants in full-scale

attacks, being citizens of the same country and not enemy platforms in the real sense.

The controversial results of troops deployment in Odi, Bayelsa State and Choba, River State, where soldiers wreaked great havoc on civilian settlements as reprisals for the killing of security operatives, have also led Army authorities to measure military response to attacks by militants in the Niger Delta.

## How Atiku's security aide was killed, by eyewitness

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The statement disclosed that the witness completed his undergraduate study in Mathematics from the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, four days to the incident.

The witness said the shot that killed Okonkwo "was fired by the driver of the

Polytechnic where he was to write a paper in Accounting. He was studying for his Ordinary National Diploma in Business Administration. We were three on the trip and we had a smooth ride until we were stopped by a highway police patrol."

The eyewitness was reported to have said that