

According to Adelusi,

## **Two soldiers missing in fresh attack by militants**

---

*From Kelvin Ebiri  
(Port Harcourt)  
and Madu Onuorah  
(Abuja)*

---

**S**USPECTED militants struck again yesterday in the Niger Delta, attacking a military houseboat close to Soku in Rivers State. There are fears that they may have abducted two military personnel on duty at the oil facilities.

Yesterday's attack came as the Joint Military Task Force in Rivers State announced it has rescued alive about four soldiers who are victims of Monday's attack by the militants.

The unspecified number

*Continued on Page 2*

# Two soldiers missing in fresh attack

*Continued from Page 1*

of militants during yesterday's surprise attack were said to have disarmed the two military men before kidnapping them. So far, no group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

The Public Relations Officer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amphibious Brigade, Major Musa Sagir, could not confirm the incident as at press time.

But in an earlier interview on the major search and rescue operation for victims of Monday's attack, Sagir told *The Guardian* that the indigenous of Billie, a nearby riverine community in Rivers State where the attack took place have been co-operating and assisting the military in the rescue operation.

He said the soldiers rescued were already receiving medical attention in an undisclosed hospital. He explained that the task force was making major progress in the operation.

According to him, more details would be made available at the end of the exercise.

There were indications yesterday that the military might have also recovered the remains of three soldiers and that of the vessel driver.

*The Guardian* learnt that the militants who ambushed the unsuspecting vessel carrying fuel and other essential supplies to Shell locations in the swampy area of the Niger Delta indiscriminately opened fire on it and in the process

killed some persons on board.

According to a source, some marine workers of a contractor to Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) who were feared abducted or killed by the militants have been found. The source, who explained that the details were still sketchy, said she could not confirm the exact figure of those rescued.

"Some of the people feared to have been missing, I mean the workers of a contractor to Shell, have been found. I cannot confirm the exact figure but they are well and okay. We are investigating the cause of the attack to determine those who were involved. We are praying fervently that others who are still missing should still be found," she said.

In what could be perceived as a major crack-down on the strongholds of the militants, a military helicopter was seen hovering around the creek area of Port Harcourt yesterday.

Due to the incessant kidnapping and killing of military personnel and expatriate oil workers, there a series of raid have been carried out on suspected militant strongholds in Rivers State.

Combatants of the Joint Revolutionary Council (JRC), comprising Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and The Martyrs Brigade in a statement on Monday, claimed responsibility

for the attack.

In a statement, the group's spokesperson, Cynthia Whyte, had demanded the unconditional release of detained leader of the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force, Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari.

According to Whyte, the militants have demonstrated their ability and capability to prove to the armed forces of the Nigerian state that they could attack "anywhere, anytime and anyhow."

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

The Army Headquarters yesterday confirmed that it had launched an investigation into the killing of its personnel by militants at the SPDC oil facility near Billie in Rivers State.

Niger Delta militants numbering about 70 were reported to have ambushed the soldiers along the creeks.

## How Ki-Moon swept colour-coded

*Continued from Page 1*

members of the council.

Bolton added that he would be surprised if any new candidate were to emerge.

The Chinese Ambassador, Zeng Li who had emerged first from the Security Council chambers after the poll was even more emphatic than any other person, declaring matter-of-factly that "it is clear" that the Security Council is ready to elect Ban Ki-Moon as the next scribe of the UN.

China has been known as an astute defender of tradition that favours an Asian as the next helmsman of the UN. Even when a non-Asian candidate emerged, the Chinese made it clear that it would veto any non-Asian candidate.

All things being equal till Monday when the final and formal vote would be held, the quiet but much-respect-

ed Ki-Moon will be succeeding Annan on January 1, 2007.

Results of the first colour-coded straw poll held Monday at the UN headquarters showed that Ki-Moon had the support of all five permanent members of the Security Council, who all voted to encourage him to contest in the fourth straw poll.

In all, Ki-Moon secured 14 *encourage* votes and one *no opinion*.

If that trend continues on Monday when the formal and final vote would be taken, Annan's successor would be elected by the General Assembly before the end of the month since what is required to become a candidate the Security Council can recommend to the General Assembly is at least nine votes with no veto from the five permanent members of the Council.