

Militants kill two, kidnap five foreigners in Eket

• Group claims death of nine soldiers in Rivers

MORE distressing reports of youth-restriveness emerged from the Niger Delta region yesterday.

In Rivers State, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) claimed to have killed nine soldiers, while in the hitherto serene Eket, Cross River State, two security officials were confirmed dead and five foreign oil workers kidnapped.

MEND claimed that the clash in Rivers State fol-

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lowed an attack on some communities by soldiers, which forced its members to engage in reprisal action that led to the death of the soldiers.

The MEND's claim could not be independently confirmed last night. In e-mail messages sent to local and

foreign media houses, the group said that the unnamed communities were attacked with nine gunboats and one helicopter gunship belonging to the Nigerian Army.

Eket had never recorded any kidnap incident until yesterday when a gang of youths stormed the Esa Akpan quarters of the expatriates and made away with five of them said to be on the staff of Bristol Heli-

copter.

According to a witness, the kidnappers arrived at Eket on board a speedboat around 7p.m. and began shooting.

In the process, two private security men of Irongate Security Securities, Anthony Eyo and Udom Ekpe were killed by the gunmen who later escaped in a speedboat with their captives.

4 deadline for govt