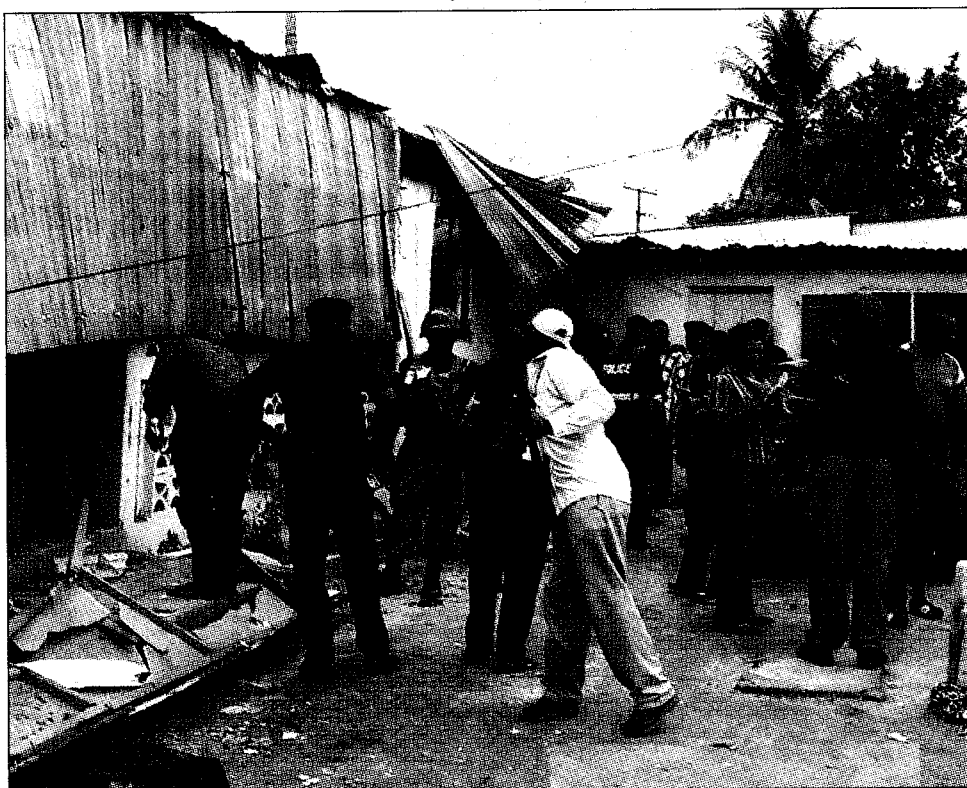


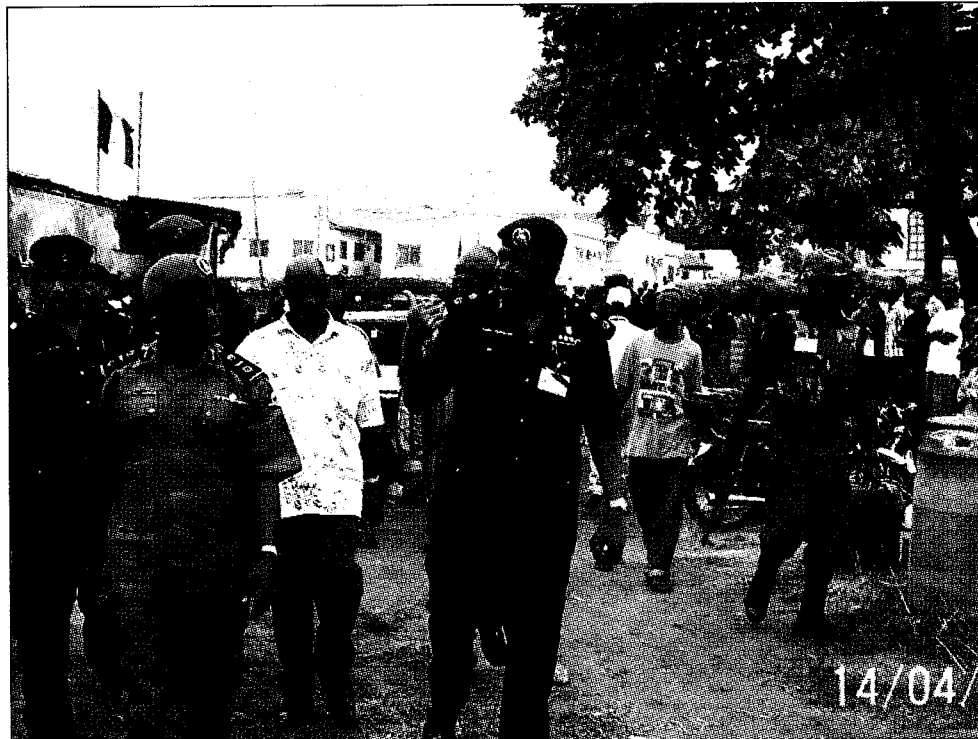
## CITY SHOTS



Elenwo Police station after the attack ... yesterday.



Policemen and sympathisers at Mini Okoro Police station after the explosion.

Assistant Inspector General of Police, Ade Ajakaye (second left), Felix Ogbaudu, Rivers State Police Commissioner (right) on an inspection of the attacked Police stations ... yesterday.  
PHOTOS: KELVIN EBIRI

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## Gunmen Kill Seven Policemen, Injure Soldiers In Rivers

FROM KELVIN EBIRI, PORT HARCOURT

**SUSPECTED** militants in the earlier hours of yesterday killed seven policemen and razed down the Mini-Okoro and Elenwo police stations in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital.

Similarly, some militants ambushed and attacked men of the Joint Task Force (JTF) around the Ogbakiri and Buguma axis. Two of the soldiers were reportedly wounded and their weapons stolen.

The *Guardian* gathered that some men armed with weapons such as machine-gun and dynamites stormed the Mini-Okoro police station at Rumuobiokani at about 2am.

A policeman, who survived the attack, explained that himself and late colleagues heard some people they presumed to be politicians discussing about the elections. Shortly afterward, they heard explosions outside the police station.

Jolted by the sound, some of the policemen ran out of the station to ascertain the cause of the explosion. Just then, the militants stormed the station and prevented them from escaping.

Having taken control of the station, the militants demanded for the key to the armoury and carted away an unspecified number of rifles. They also proceeded to the cell to free all the suspects in detention. After this, they planted dynamites in strategic places inside the building.

While they were ransacking the police station for weapons, the militants held about eight police officers hostage. But they later released two policemen said to be from Ikwerre and Ogoni. The remaining six were left inside.

And just as the militants stepped out of the building, the dynamites were detonated, killing all the policemen trapped inside. The explosives blew off the roof of the house and ripped the walls.

Some police vehicles were burnt and others had their windscreens riddled with gun bullets. All the case files at the police station were also completely burnt. Scores of people gathered to see at the smouldering ruin of the building.

The militants also attacked the Elenwo police station shortly after. A senior police officer at the station told journalists that the militants also attacked the station with dynamites.

According to him, "When they came to this place, they started firing and detonating dynamites. We were more than 50 policemen, mostly deployed to Rivers State for elections, sleeping inside the premises." He said what saved most of the policemen was that the militants had first gone to a hotel bordering the police station where they detonated dynamites.

"It was God that diverted their attention," he said. "They could not come in immediately, so majority of us escaped through the back. We jumped out through the fence. They pushed one motorbike into the DPO's office. One in the cell after all the suspects were released. They then ignited the motorbikes."

The militants shot dead a police driver who was sleeping inside one of the patrol vans donated to the station by the state government last Friday. The impact of the dynamite blew off the roof of the building and destroyed it almost beyond repair.

The Rivers State Commissioner of Police, Felix Ogbaudu, who visited the two police stations in company of the Assistant Inspector General of Police zone 6, Adewole Ajekaiye, described the unprovoked attack as tragic.

He told *The Guardian* that the militants "killed seven policemen including the Mini-Okoro DCO. These young policemen were mainly Rivers and Bayelsa States indigenes. They invaded the stations with machineguns and dynamites. Freed the suspects."

The militants also attacked men of the JTF around the Ogbakiri-Buguma axis of the state. The spokesperson of the JTF, Major Musa Sagir said the two soldiers were injured, one critically.

"They wounded two, but one critically," he said. "I can confirm that there was such encounter and two of our soldiers were shot. It happened around Buguma. They are our regular soldiers posted to the area to ensure an enabling environment for people to go about their duties without molestation."