

# Gunmen Kill Two Policemen, Kidnap 10 Oil Workers In Rivers

FROM KELVIN EBIRI,  
PORT-HARCOURT

**A**GAIN, suspected gunmen yesterday stormed the staff quarters of the Eleme Petroleum Company/Indorama in Rivers State killling two policemen and abducting 10 employees of the firm.

A senior official of Indorama who pleaded anonymity disclosed to *The Guardian* that scores of gunmen also armed with lethal weapons such as dynamite and heavy machine invaded the quarters where the company's expatriates live at Akpajo-Eleme, in Eleme Council. The gunmen, who took the security men deployed to the compound by surprise, opened fire on them and killed two policemen. Having overpowered the other security men, the bandits proceeded to abduct 10 persons among them six Indorama expatriates suspected to be mainly Indians, two women and two children.

Panic-stricken residents of Akpajo-Eleme, who expressed grave concern

that the peaceful nature of their community had been violated by militants, complained of sporadic gunshots that lasted several hours.

Fourteen days ago, gunmen under similar circumstance, abducted two Indian engineers, Messrs Debashish Kakoty and Sunil Dave, at their residence along Chinda Street, Elelenwo. Their whereabouts remains unknown.

Perturbed by the recent spate of kidnappings, scores of Indorama staff besieged the company's gate yesterday to protest the abduction of their colleagues. The workers urged the Federal and State Governments to take decisive steps to address the lingering Niger Delta crisis that has culminated in the kidnapping of foreigners.

The Rivers State Police Public Relations Officer, Mrs. Ireju Barasua confirmed the killing of the policemen and the abduction of the Indorama Oil workers but said they were only three. She however could not disclose the nationality of the latest hostage

victims.

Meanwhile, a few hours after the kidnap, the Rivers State Governor, Celestine Omejia, in his maiden broadcast to the people of the state, warned that government would not hesitate to clampdown on those who he accused of engaging in violent criminality and brigandage.

The governor recalled that the previous federal and state governments had granted amnesty and offered significant amount of public funds as incentive for the return of illegal arms. He noted that a few deviants who had chosen criminality and to profit from innocent blood still wanted to continue to hold society hostage in their reign of terror.

Omejia whose mother was recently kidnapped and later released, noted that those involved in hostage taking had through their lust for greed, disrupted recreation and social life in the state and also impaired economic activity. He said no decent society would tolerate this assault on its humanity.

"In the name of God and

everything that we hold dear and sacred, I urge every citizen and community in Rivers State to rise up and unite to stop this devilish assault on society," he said.

The governor said the new administration in the state stood prepared to pardon and rehabilitate any misguided person(s) who voluntarily turned a new leaf.

But he warned that his administration "will go to any length, at any cost, to track down those who choose to indulge in criminality and bring them to justice together with their patrons and sponsors."

He said government would not relent in its effort to crush the militants because there would be no hiding place for them soon.

Ehindoro Bows Out As Okoro Steps In