

## NEWS

# Soldiers kill nine suspected militants in Bayelsa

**T**HESE seem to be bad times for Niger Delta armed youths as soldiers yesterday morning gunned down nine of them suspected to be militants near the Ogbainbiri flow station in Southern Ijaw Local Council. The flow station belongs to the

Nigeria Agip Oil Company (NAOC).

According to reports, the suspected militants were sailing in their speedboat around the area when soldiers on sighting them opened fire.

The co-ordinator of the Bayelsa Volunteers, the

*From Willie Etim,  
Yenagoa*

state-owned security outfit, Chief Joshua Benemesia, told *The Guardian* that he received a call from some of his workers stationed at Ogbainbiri that there was a shoot-out around the area.

He explained that about nine youths, all male, were killed in the incident.

The Bayelsa State Police Commissioner, Mr. Julian Okpalake, however declined comment on the matter and directed *The Guardian* to the military com-

mand for confirmation.

Only recently, some militant groups in the region resolved to lay down their arms and dialogue with the relevant authorities.

This effort has resulted in the release of several hostages earlier held by various militant groups in the region.

The recent case was the release of 12 expatriate oil workers by the

Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)

The Governor of Bayelsa State, Chief Timipre Sylva-Sam, at the formal handing over of the hostages, had said that the era of kidnapping in the state had gone, as issues discussed during the interaction with some of the militants would be promptly addressed.

