

Soldiers kill suspected militant, arrest two in Rivers

From Kelvin Ebiri (Port Harcourt) and Chido Okafor (Warri)

ONE suspected militant was on Monday killed while two of his colleagues were arrested by men of the Joint Military Task Force (JTF) during a botched attempt to abduct some South Korean expatriates at Mbiama, Ahoada East Local Council of Rivers State.

The militants at about 9.30 p.m. attacked a Daewoo expatriates' camp at Mbiama but encountered stiff resistance from the military.

A Daewoo employee, who pleaded anonymity, told to *The Guardian* that the militants stormed the camp in two buses. He said that the arrival of the buses aroused the curiosity of the security men who immediately became more alert.

In a bid to gain access to the expatriates' compound, the militants began to shoot sporadically at the military men who responded swiftly. In the gun duel, one of the militants was reportedly shot dead.

The militants fled, leaving behind two of their colleagues who had sustained severe gunshot

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injuries. The two were consequently arrested by the military men. .

The source disclosed that the military men seized one of the buses as well as weapons and ammunition belonging to the militants.

The Rivers State Police Command spokesperson, Deputy Superintendent Ireju Barasua, confirmed the incident.

Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) had on Monday revealed that one of its Nigerian employees and a contractor working on the Soku-Buguma trunk line were kidnapped by suspected militants in Rivers State last Saturday.

The Anglo-Dutch company Information Offi-

cer, Mr. Precious Okolobo, said that the engineers were repairing the Soku-Buguma line when some armed men abducted them near Buguma in Asari-Toru Local Council of the state.

The JTF Commander, Brig.-Gen. Lawrence Ngubane and the Army Task Force Commander (Port Harcourt), Col. A. O. Umahi who was in Warri yesterday, also confirmed the incident.

The foil was possible, *The Guardian* learnt, because the JTF had earlier increased the number of troops in the area after the June 17 attack at an Agip flow station in Bayelsa State, during which three soldiers, two workers of Agip and 15 militants,

were killed.

Ngubane said several numbers of dynamites, AK 47 rifle, 60 rounds of 7.62 mm special ammunition and a bus used for the operation were recovered from the suspected militants.

The captured kidnappers are reportedly being held at the Effurun headquarters of the task force, including the body of the deceased.

Also, Col. Umahi said that unlike in the past when the militants overpowered soldiers at Daewoo Camp at Ogu and captured some workers, the soldiers in the last attempt overpowered the militants in a fierce gun duel leaving them with no other option than to run into the forest.