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Militants kill naval rating in Shell's facility raid

From Madu Onuorah , Abuja

THE Joint Task Force (JTF) yesterday confirmed that militants killed one naval rating in a midnight attack on a logistic station owned by the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC).

The JTF also said that two naval personnel guarding the facility sustained injuries while four Shell speedboats were carted away by the miscreants. The Shell station is located along the Nembe creeks in Bayelsa State.

However, Co-ordinator, Joint Media Campaign Centre, Col. Rabe Abubakar, said the JTF has launched a manhunt for perpetrators of this attack and "in just a matter of time, we would get them."

Abubakar disclosed that the attack on the logistics station was jointly carried out by two militant leaders, Kitikata and Fara Dagogo.

He noted that the raid was a retaliatory attack on the JTF following the Easter day sinking of four of the militants' speedboats.

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In the process of sinking the four boats, all the militants who were occupying the boats drowned.

According to Abubakar, about 20 militants who were being conveyed in six speedboats were caught in a cross fire with JTF troops on April 12, 2009, at Okilo Creek near Igbomotoru River, Tebideba Route, Bayelsa State, sinking four of the armed militants speedboats with all the occupants while two managed to escape with gunshot wounds. One soldier was injured and is currently receiving treatment.

The JTF spokesman said the militants, led by their leader, were routed while they were coming from their hideout in the creek after they had carried out armed robberies and rapes.

"They were closing up on our (JTF) location. But unknown to the armed youths, the JTF troops, following a tip-off, were battle ready. And in the process of engaging the security outfit, the militants were shooting indiscriminately. While defending the facility and ourselves, the JTF returned fire, resulting in sinking four of the militants' speedboats with all the occupants in the ensued battle due to our (JTF) superior firepower," the force spokesman said.

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