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BUSINESS SERVICES

Wednesday, April 22, 2009

Robbers kill four, steal N200m

◦ Gunmen attack vessel, abduct Turks

From Kelvin Ebiri, Port Harcourt

A GANG of armed men yesterday at Mbiama Town before the bridge in Bayelsa State, attacked a bullion van belonging to a new generation bank in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, killing two police escorts and two civilians. About N200 million was carted away.

The Police could not be reached last night to confirm the report.

In another development, armed men yesterday attacked an oil tanker off the coast of the River State and abducted the ship's captain and chief engineer.

The vessel, MT Alenaya Mercan, chartered by French oil firm, Total, was attacked on its way to Onne Port in Rivers State.

After taking the two hostages, the gunmen allowed the tanker to continue its journey. The victims were identified as Turkish nationals.

When contacted, a senior officer with Total in Nigeria, who sought for anonymity, denied the firm was affected in the attack.

"Our company is not affected by the incident," he said.

He said if somebody bought a product from firm B and he was attacked on the way, such action could not translate to an attack on the firm that sold the product.

The tanker was attacked by suspected sea pirates who seized the Turkish nationals off the coast of Bonny, Rivers State.

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A security operative at the Onne Oil and Gas Free Zone told The Guardian yesterday that the vessel was attacked about 30 minutes from the shores of Bonny and 50 nautical miles from the town.

He confirmed that the vessel was bound for Onne Port before it was attacked. At the time of going to press, the gunmen had not made any ransom demands or stated why the foreigners were taken hostage.

According to him, the captain of the vessel, Mr. Taskiran Sinan and the second engineer, Sengul Salim, were abducted by the gunmen who took them to an unknown destination.

There were 15 Turkish personnel on board.

When contacted, the Rivers State Police Command spokesperson, Mrs. Rita Inoma-Abbey, said she was not aware of the incident.

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