

# 14 Soldiers Feared Killed By Militants

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## SSS Arrests Lady Over Death Threats To Ministers – A2

Fourteen soldiers were feared killed on Monday in an encounter with Niger Delta militants on the Cawthorne Channel in the Kalabari axis of Rivers State.

Military authorities however confirmed five dead and nine missing in action.

The soldiers were escorting a convoy of barges and boats carrying supplies of water, fuel

and other materials to Shell fields in the Ekulama area

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when the militants arrived in boats, opened fire on them, sank the vessel and sped off.

Army Public Relations Officer of the 2nd Amphibious Brigade in Port Harcourt, Major Sagir Musa, confirmed the incident but added that some soldiers escaped.

He said efforts are on to locate those missing.

Apart from the soldiers, it was gathered that one boatman was also killed while 25 contractor personnel and three boatmen were equally abducted.

Shell also confirmed the incident. "An SPDC convoy taking fuel and other supplies to swamp locations was attacked today (Monday) by an armed group. We're investigating incident and can't give further details", an SPDC official volunteered.

The Joint Revolutionary Council (JRC) - comprising NDPVF, MEND and The Martyrs Brigade - claimed responsibility for the attack; a warning to the authorities to release its leader.

Muhajeed Dokubo-Asari, or face more violence.

A statement posted online by the JRC stressed that "the key victims of this confrontation were soldiers who at one time or the other attacked our communities and, assaulted our people. This judgment will be continued, on-going and sustained.

"We will scale up this campaign with every show of insincerity on the part of the Nigerian state and those that lord over it.

"The purpose of this celebration of ability and capability was to prove to the Armed Forces of the Nigerian state that we can take on them any where, any time and any how.

"As combatants who recognise the need to respect the rules of engagement, we resisted all urge to smoothly take out all the malnourished and underpaid soldiers of the Nigerian state."

Gunmen killed four Naval officers in the area four months ago, then kidnapped some expatriates.

A statement the JRC issued on Sunday, signed by its Spokesperson Cynthia Whyte,

said: "For more than one year now, our patriotic and esteemed leader Dokubo has been under the detention of the very dubious, Satanic, corrupt and morally bankrupt forces that today lord over the contraption called Nigeria.

"At the time of his arrest, he had gladly taken up the role of 'Peacemaker' in the Niger Delta and beyond, providing a bridge between warring personalities, groups and communities. In spite of this, the hegemony that rules the Nigerian contraption thought it wise to criminally arrest and detain our leader and flag bearer of the Ijaw struggle.

"Let us make this very clear. We do not and cannot beg for his release. As the flag bearer of the Ijaw and Niger Delta, and as a great grandson of the famous Kalabari warrior Amachree, Mujahid Dokubo-Asari has always known that persecutions, trials and dark clouds will always arise. We believe that his current travails are part of the dictates of his onerous calling. Great men

have always passed that route.

"We commend the efforts of the international community, especially the United States and Great Britain, for recognising the grievousness of the Niger Delta question. Through the efforts of progressive minded groups, organisations and persons in the United States, the grimacing degree of our pain, poverty and plight has become a subject of discussion on high profile desks.

"However, we condemn in all fullness, the activities of dubious, sycophant and corrupt organisations such as GoodWorks International and the Leon H. Sullivan Foundation which have, over time, served as conduits for the frittering away of our monies without recourse to subtle remorse.

"The organisations have partnered with the corrupt regime of Obasanjo to unleash on citizens of the Nigerian state criminally minded development initiatives such as The Obasanjo Library.

"These organisations have also connived with ChevronTexaco to siphon large amounts of monies in the name of creating

programmes to improve the quality of lives of poor Niger Delta people.

"In furtherance therefore, we demand the full closure and disruption of the activities of these Satanic groups in the Niger Delta. We also demand in all fullness, the unconditional release of Mujahid Dokubo-Asari from the gallows of the Nigerian state.

"Failure to accede to these demands will incur our wrath. We are poised to begin another round of grim hostilities on the Nigerian state and its imperialist collaborators. We condemn all those who seek to cheapen the Niger Delta struggle by resorting to commercial hostage taking. In the future, there shall be no hostage taking or keeping by our group or alliance members.

"If in the circumstances that we are forced to take hostages, they shall merely be serving the purpose of human shields and will never be used as bargaining tools.

"All future hostages that may be taken will be agents and collaborators of the Nigerian state. This is our word for the moment."