

# **Soldiers Kill Nine Militants In Bayelsa**

## **• 27 Policemen Die In Auto Crash**

By Emma Gbemudu (Yenagoa)  
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Troops in the Joint Military Taskforce (JTF) on Wednesday killed nine militants and arrested one in Ogboinbiri, Bayelsa State during a gun battle that lasted nearly two hours.

The soldiers confiscated arms and ammunition found in the speed boat of the group.

Upland in Benue, 27 mobile police officers perished in a motor accident on Gboko-Aliade Road on

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their way from Jalingo to Port Harcourt on special duty. Three civilians also died.

Back in Bayelsa, the Commander of Bayelsa Volunteers, a security outfit of the state government, Joshua Benemaisia, confirmed the deaths in Yenagoa, as did Major Omale Oshaguwuba, JTF Public Relations Officer.

However, no soldier died, Oshaguwuba added.

Police Public Relations Officer, Ibokette Iniobong, could not be reached for comment.

An eyewitness narrated that trouble started around 4 a.m. when the occupants of the boat defied soldiers who flagged it down at a river check point.

The soldiers opened fire, the militants responded in kind, but were overpowered.

Last Monday, Governor Timipre Sylva of Bayelsa secured the release of 12 expatriate hostages and one Nigerian in Southern Ijaw Council after negotiating with the insurgents.

Sylva said no ransom was paid to free the men who had stayed between 14 and 38 days

in captivity.

Meanwhile, two police survivors of the motor accident are on danger list at the General Hospital in Aliade.

An eyewitness said a bus belonging to Taraba State Transport Service (marked Taraba XA 162 YRR) in which the officers were travelling collided with a Mercedes lorry (marked Anambra XE 335 GDD) ferrying frozen fish from Port Harcourt to Gboko.

It occurred at Achoho on the boundary between Konshisha and Gwer Councils in Benue.

Sunday Ugoh, one of the rescuers, said 27 police officers died on the spot, together with the three occupants of the lorry, bringing the death toll to 30.

Another eyewitness, Michael Nyipilah, added that those who stopped to assist the victims complained of the recklessness of the bus driver, who possibly left his lane and rammed into the lorry.

The medical officer in charge of the hospital, Samuel Anaka, said the two police survivors, Corporal John Odeh and Police Constable Ibrahim Muktar, are

responding to treatment.

Odeh confirmed that the team left Jalingo at 5 p.m. the previous day.

Benue Commissioner of Police, Udom Ekpoudom, visited the scene of the accident and the hospital in company of other senior police officers.

He described it as a painful tragedy for the police and the nation and commiserated with the families of the deceased.

The police authorities will compensate and take proper care of the families of the officers because they died in active service, he said.