

Three naval ratings, six pirates killed in clash

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• Navy arrests 15 Filipinos, impounds vessel

A BLOODY clash between operatives of the Joint Task Force (JTF) in the Niger Delta, code-named 'Operation Pulo Shield', and a gang of pirates near Agbara oil field in Brass area, Bayelsa State, has resulted in the alleged death of three naval ratings.

This is men of the Central Naval Command (CNC) in Bayelsa State have arrested 15 Filipinos and a vessel named MT. ST. Vanessa over alleged crude oil theft in the

Niger Delta region.

Daily Independent gathered that the clash on Tuesday, which took place 21 nautical miles off the shores of Twon Brass, headquarters of Brass local government area, also resulted in the alleged death six pirates.

Sources said on Tuesday that two naval personnel were flown to Port Harcourt, the capital of Rivers State, for treatment.

The naval ratings were es-

corting a vessel containing undisclosed contents heading towards Bonny Terminal.

Spokesman of the JTF, Onyema Nwachukwu, confirmed the clash, saying that the security outfit recorded three casualties while six pirates were killed by its men.

MT. ST. Vanessa was suspected to have lifted crude oil worth 8.5million litres along the Akassa waterways in Brass Local Government

Area of the state.

Daily Independent learnt that the vessel was allegedly used to steal 500,000 litres of crude per day during a period of 10 days that it stayed on the Akassa waters on the fringe of the Atlantic Ocean.

The vessel was said to have been monitored with the aid of Regional Maritime Domain Awareness Centre (RAMSAC) after it was seen roving on the Akassa waterways.