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## West Africa

## Nigerian gunmen strike in Delta region

September 08 2008 at 09:49AM

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Port Harcourt - Nigerian gunmen killed a crew member of a supply vessel and abducted another in the latest attack on the oil industry in the restive Niger Delta, the army said on Sunday.

The Fulmar Lamnco, operated by the local unit of Italy's energy group Eni, was travelling from Brass to Port Harcourt, the region's main city, when it was attacked early on Sunday.

Officials of the oil multinational in Nigeria could not be immediately contacted for comment.

"One crew member (was) reportedly killed and (another) abducted," Lieutenant Colonel Sagir Musa, spokesperson for the military task force in Rivers state, said.

The nationalities of the crewmen was not immediately known and no group had yet claimed responsibility for the attack.



"Those responsible for the dastardly act are yet to be identified," Musa said.

He said the father of a local politician was kidnapped in a separate incident in the oil hub of Port Harcourt, apparently for ransom.

The latest boat attack came barely three weeks after gunmen hijacked a supply vessel belonging to oil services company West Africa Offshore with eight Nigerian crew members.

The vessel was returning from the giant Agbami offshore field operated by US oil major Chevron to Onne in Rivers state when it was seized on August 25.

Insecurity in the vast wetlands region surged in early 2006 when militants, who say they are fighting for more local control of the impoverished region's oil wealth, started blowing up oil pipelines and kidnapping foreign workers.

Criminal gangs have taken advantage of a breakdown in law and order and the instability has become as much about control of a lucrative trade in stolen oil and abductions for ransom as about political struggle.

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