

~~Soldiers kill militant~~ leader Ateke Tom's deputy

**From Clarice Azuatalam,
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THE military has said that they have killed the second-in-command to the leader of Niger Peoples Vigilante Force (NPVF), Ateke Tom.

Spokesman of the Joint Task Force (JTF) on the Niger Delta, Major Musa Sagir, disclosed in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital, that the unnamed deputy was killed in an operation at Okirika yesterday.

Tom's men first opened fire on the men of the JTF who had been stationed in Okrika.

In the ensuing counter-attack, the JTF gunned down the Tom's deputy.

After this first operation, Tom's men retreated, and reinforced to launch another attack on the JTF. Unknown to them, the military men had also reinforced. Another gun-battle ensued after which the Tom's men fled.

It was not clear if the JTF sustained any casualty, but it was said that after the second attack, the military launched a "cordon and search" operation.

Though Musa did not disclose the number of arrests the search operation yielded, but sources in the area said that the Okrika people were jubilating over the successful military operation in the area.