

# 12 militants feared killed

## •Navy warns miscreants

**N**O fewer than 12 militants may have been killed in Tuesday night's failed attempt by factional members of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) to hijack the Navy's gunboat, NNS Obula, sources said yesterday.

A boat carrying the dead fighters was reportedly torpedoed by the Cat class NNS Obula, at the Pennington-Middleton River estuary where the attack took place.

The remains of one of the militants were retrieved by naval personnel from the NNS Delta, Warri Naval Base on Wednesday night.

Additional revelations on the attack, in which one naval personnel died (four ratings were injured), indicated that the attack was launched by gunmen in over 20 boats fitted with machine guns and rocket propelled grenade (RPG).

It was gathered that the boats assumed an attack formation as soon as they got close to the vessel, which was commissioned into the service of the Navy in March 2004, forming a ring around it.

A security source who spoke under condition of anonymity, said the invaders, who underestimated the firepower of the gunboat, later ran out of ammunition. "This forced them to beat a hasty tactical retreat."

It was gathered that contrary to the release by MEND, its fighters suffered heavy casualty from the at-

From Shola O'Neil, Warri tack.

Specifically, a security source told *The Nation* yesterday that the personnel aboard the vessel were able to shoot down one of the boats.

"There was no doubt that their (militants') intention was to hijack the gunboat and commandeer it to one of their bases. But they apparently got more than they bargained for.

As I am talking to you now, we have the body of one of the dead militia. We decided to take only one of them to unravel the gang behind this incident," our source added.

NNS Delta, the Warri Naval Base spokesman, Lieutenant Sikiru Adigun, con-

firmed that MEND suffered "devastating human and material losses on the part of the attackers".

The Navy has warned that it would henceforth deal ruthlessly with miscreants that fomenting trouble in the Niger Delta as NNS OBULA and other ships are capable of protecting lives and property.

Saying that the Navy should not be taken for granted, the Director of Naval Information, Captain Henry Babalola, yesterday in a statement stressed that "the Nigerian Navy reiterates that she will continue to perform her statutory policing functions and warns of very dire consequences if sea robbers and other miscreants do not desist from attacks on their facilities".

## Ibori: Court r

**A** FEDERAL High Court sitting in Benin, Edo State will on November 9 rule on its jurisdiction in a suit against the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and two others.

The plaintiffs are the Delta State Attorney-General and four others.

Justice Gloria Okeke yesterday adjourned ruling in the matter after taking arguments from counsel to both plaintiffs and defendants.

But, the EFCC counsel said if the Delta-State Government had nothing to



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