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[Shola O'Neil, Warri](#)

18/11/2010 02:05:00



JTF seeking sanity in the Niger Delta. PHOTO: SHOLA O'NEIL

AFTER a long lull, guns are booming again in the Niger Delta, with the Joint Task Force (JTF) launching Wednesday a massive operation against militants.

It is part of JTF's execution of Defence Headquarters' directive to uproot the remaining militants' camps.

They raided at least two suspected camps in the creeks, following a spate of kidnappings and attacks on oil facilities.

It was gathered that the task force under Sector 1 Commander Col. Jamil Sarham embarked on a huge operation in Burutu, Delta State.

Sources said over 10 gun boats are parading the Burutu River, in search of warlords.

“At the moment, we have ongoing operations in several locations simultaneously,” JTF spokesman Timothy Antigha said. He could not immediately give details.

The military warned on Saturday it planned to raid suspected criminals’ camps. It told civilians in the vicinity to leave.

The development came on the heels of a threat by a militant group to attack oil facilities in Warri/Burutu.

The group, Bounanaowei (owner of the forest), said it was protesting JTF’s attack and clean-up of a militant camp at Obotobo I in Burutu Local Government Area.

The group, also known as ‘the gods’, is led by ‘General’ Godday Smith.

It said it would unleash unprecedented attacks on oil installations, with a view to crippling the economy.

Bounanaowei warned oil multinationals to withdraw their workers or risk deadly attacks and abduction.

The group’s spokesperson, Col. Pascal, said it was in support of the declaration by General John Togo of the Niger Delta Liberation

Force (NDLF) to continue the armed struggle. He said the Amnesty programme of the Federal Government had failed.

Pascal said it was also joining with factional MEND leader John Togo, who withdrew from the amnesty.

He condemned the directive from the Ministry of Defence that all militant camps should be destroyed, saying “it will lead to chaos; they should employ dialogue and fulfil their promises to all marginalised and aggrieved militant groups.

“Our resolve to return to the creeks stem from the sidelining of many true fighters and replacing such with ghost militants, they have failed to resolve this issue, why should there be ceiling to the number of militants to be registered in the amnesty programme? You see, we have no choice but to return to the creeks to ensure that no oil flows from the region.” he added.

“You may destroy camps but you cannot stop this war because the people are still alive with their guns, you cannot fight militants and win because people are being recruited every day. We advise the Federal Government to call the JTF to stop this war because we would fight to the finish,” Pascal said.

Renegade MEND leader John Togo was reportedly setting up camp in the area where the shooting occurred, according to sources.

Sources said many deaths had occurred although this could not be

confirmed independently as a result of the JTF onslaught.

Calls to Togo's mobile phone were unanswered last night.

Also yesterday, five people were killed in an attack in Cameroon on a boat carrying guards for an offshore oil field operated by French firm Perenco SA, the company said in a statement.

The attack late Tuesday night came as the vessel operated at an oil field abutting Nigerian territorial waters, possibly signalling that militants waging attacks in recent days from the oil-rich Niger Delta may have targeted the crew. However, no militant group immediately claimed responsibility for the assault.

The attack killed three Cameroonian soldiers and two private Cameroonian security contractors as they motored through Perenco's Moudi oil field, the company said.

"Perenco is currently lending all the support it can to the Cameroon authorities at this sad time and will provide further information as and when appropriate," the company said in the statement.

The oil-rich Gulf of Guinea is increasingly becoming a target for pirate attacks, mainly from Nigeria and Cameroon. Areas around Cameroon's nearby Bakassi Peninsula, where militias have been fighting with government troops since Nigeria ceded the land to Cameroon in 2006, remain prone to piracy and attacks.

Niger Delta militants have launched a series of new attacks in

recent days, raiding two offshore oil fields and kidnapping 14 workers — seven of whom are expatriates. MEND has claimed responsibility for those attacks and promised more in the days to come.

Comments (12 posted):

[almarady](#) on 18/11/2010 08:58:21



Is there any thing like MEND attacking Nigerian resources? Blinded by greed and selfishness, people like Jonathan will say no. Its not MEND "my boys", it must be the northerners.



-8

Killian Agbarakwe on 18/11/2010 10:00:48



When will this cat and mouse game between the FG and the militants come to and end? President Goodluck Jonathan is from the Niger Delta, his people should give him the chance to govern this nation. Whereby they refuse, the criminals among them should be bombed out of existence so that we can have peace in this region.



8

Asogwa Clement on 18/11/2010 11:26:02



The people that call themselves again in Niger Delta are criminals. Anybody that speak in favour of the criminals should be handled as such. The President of Nigeria is from there. He has been doing a lot to calm them down, but they don't listen. There is ministry of Niger Delt, NDDC, Special Allocation to the States, then FEDERAL ALLOCATIONS. What happens to all these money within their disposal? We appeal to JTF to after these criminals for NIGERIA to have peace.



2

[JOSHUA BEN ORJIME](#) on 18/11/2010 11:52:38



On October bombings, some people claimed to be owners of MEND in public. If really they were not lying, then they have questions to answer now.



1

Iwedi Umuibe on 18/11/2010 12:40:16



These criminals can be chased into the open sea and forced to drown. They are criminals. To hell with the term

'militants'. No society tolerates this level of criminality and expects to be taken seriously. In as much as we understand and appreciate the level of neglect of the region by past rulers, nothing justifies this nonsense from these crooks. They should give Jonathan a chance to address the numerous problems plaguing this country, not the Niger Delta alone. Enough is enough. They are not fighting for any Niger Delta but stealing oil to feign for themselves alone while the environment is left more devastated.



2

bobbyfriga ibanga on 18/11/2010 12:59:13



If we said, war for war, guns for guns, the question is; will this bring the peace that we are looking for? i think this men are fighting back because the the federal govt has not been able to actualize their plans properly. even if Goodluck is from the region, remember a father do provoke the children to anger.let the fed govt get to the grass root & not the top root.



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Dave on 18/11/2010 13:18:18



This is the hand work of greedy people come to the Niger delta every body loves the president but some lazy and greedy people who are collaborating with some elements from other parts of the country to cause problems in the region.



3

Chapp Jumbo on 18/11/2010 13:23:30



Retd. Gen. Olusegun Aremu Okikiola Mathew Obasanjo spelled out Nigeria's commitment to fight apartheid unambiguously on 14 January, 1977 at a dinner for President Kaunda; the Nigerian government and people are totally committed to the cause of freedom and respect for human dignity in South Africa, not simply for its own sake, but because we are convinced that Africa freedom is a sacred duty that must be done. He further. . ., in the pursuit of this objective , we shall not consider any sacrifice too great nor any weapon too mean to hasten the end of all oppression and injustice in South Africa and to ensure the total liquidation of apartheid, foreign domination and economic exploitation.

If this is true of his statement, what is this practice of the FGN against the Niger Delta and the Niger Deltans called?
Chapp Jumbo



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Dr Mustapha Biliri on 18/11/2010 15:11:33

Militants or what you guys call yourselves, enough is enough. My President lets put an end to this problem now - once and for all. You people should stop embarrassing our dear intelligent, hardworking and humble President. Oga President, please investigate this matter a bit closely. Could be true that Funds meant for these guys are not reaching them? Is it possible that some people within the Niger delta Ministry are cheating these guys? Please check. Your leadership ability is being tested by all these happenings and Nigerians are all watching. You have to act now and Presidential for that matter!!!! May Allah Help you!!



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Loyo89 on 18/11/2010 15:39:30

These jobless moron, needs a strong lesson from the barrel of a gun, you can't fight govt like this and win and they've proven they are nothing but thieves and low lives who won't look for a job, so I say let the soldiers do their job and take all of them out once and for all. period



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egufe on 18/11/2010 16:54:40

How much more violence do we need to know the Armnesty has been a failure that will evoke harsher consequences than the Niger Delta & Nigeria could ever have imagined. What this report did not capture is that the JTF, from authoritative sources, lost two men and several other wounded in the bloody initial attempt to rade the John Togo camp which is former Isaac Boro camp in Burutu. So what's the use with the billions expended on the warped armnesty if the imilitants will not go away.



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[Daniel Akhuetie](#) on 19/11/2010 03:26:26

I still believe that Dialogue and Amnesty still remain the best solution to the Niger Delta problem and not Military bombardment or violence. Niger-Deltans are really suffering. The government should pls come to their aid.



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