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Suspected illegal bunkerers kill two soldiers, policeman in Delta

Posted by: Shola O'Neil, S'South Regional Editor, Port Harcourt in News ⌚ 2 days ago

Two soldiers, a policeman and a civilian have been shot dead by suspected illegal bunkerers reportedly led by a former militant leader in Delta State.

It was gathered that the military personnel attached to the Joint Task Force, 'Operation Pulo (Oil) Shield' were on a routine patrol when the gang opened fire on them at Egwa, Warri South West Local Government Area.

The two soldiers and a mobile policeman as well as the civilian driver of the boat died immediately. Their bodies were evacuated from the water on Sunday afternoon and brought to Warri, Delta State.

A source said: "The former militant leader from Burutu area brought a 200,000 metric ton vessel to Egwa from where they were stealing crude oil. They had loaded the boat and were returning from the creek when the JTF troops accosted them.

"In their desperate bid to escape, the captain of the vessel drove it aground on the river. It was while the military men were approaching the vessel that the criminals opened fire on them, killing the military men.

"The bodies of the dead military men and the boat driver, an indigene of Ogbe-Ijoh, have been deposited at the morgue of a government hospital in Warri."

Attempts to get the JTF Sector 1 Commander, Effurun Barracks, Lt.-Col. Bassey and the JTF Media Coordinator, Lt.-Col. Anka Mustapha, were abortive. Calls to their phones were unanswered and they were yet to respond to a text message inquiry at press time last night.

A military source at the Effurun Barracks confirmed the report, saying: "We are investigating the incident that led to it. At the appropriate time we will make our findings known."

The Nation gathered that the attack was one of several by armed gangs, particularly 'repentant' militants in the area in recent times.

Ilafe fishermen from neighbouring Ondo State have been under incessant attacks by sea pirates.

In one particular incident, over 30 speedboats used by the embattled fishermen were seized by the criminals, who demanded a ransom of N25,000 each before the boats were released.

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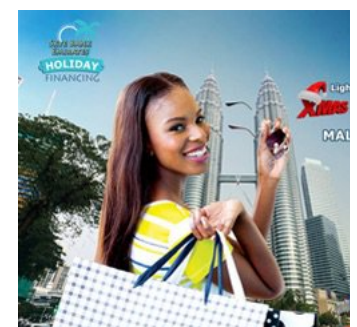
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