

JTF recovers arms from suspected pirates



•Kills suspected kidnapper

A special squad of the Joint Task Force (JTF), code-named, *Operation Pulo Shield*, has recovered a cache of arms from a gang of sea pirates that attacked its troops in Delta State on January 8.

Four soldiers attached to the JTF were killed by suspected pirates who operated on the Patrick Waterside in Warri.

The Coordinator of the Joint Media Campaign Centre (JMCC), Lt.-Col. Ado Isa, said yesterday the special squad had been on the trail of the hoodlums.

He said in one of the cordon-and-search operations, the troops recovered one AK 47 rifle with registration number 02430 and butt number 897 and two magazines loaded with 30 rounds of 7.62mm special ammunition.

Isa said another AK rifle with 13 rounds of 7.62mm special ammunition, which were among the items declared missing after the attack on the troops, was recovered.

According to him, a speedboat suspected to have been used by the hoodlums during the attack was recovered

near Bobo waterside jetty.

Though none of the kid peers was arrested, the coordinator said the task force was on trail of the perpetrators to recover more arms.

He said JTF's troops in Sector I rescued Mr. Julius Omeregie, who was kidnapped by gunmen at Okhuaihie, Uhumwode Local Government Area of Edo State.

Isa said the victim and his family of five were abducted in his Honda CRV Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV) and whisked away.

The coordinator said the kidnappers abandoned the vehicle and other members of the family on the road.

He said: "On getting the information, troops of the JTF, in conjunction with the police and local vigilantes, combed the area and rescued the victim. One of the kidnappers was killed in a shootout.

"A pump action gun with 10 rounds of cartridges was recovered and handed over to the JTF. Efforts are being made to apprehend the suspects."

Isa added that JTF's troops of Sector II, in partnership with the Directorate of State Security (DSS), discovered and destroyed two illegal refineries near Akasa 06 and 103 Cawton Channel II in Rivers State.

He said: "Two suspected illegal oil thieves were also arrested at Oreerokpe community in Okpe Local Government Area of Delta State while conveying illegally acquired Automated Gas Oil in a Jeta saloon car with registration number (Delta) AM 306 JRT.

"The suspects confessed to have carried out oil bunkering around Nigerian Port Authority (NPA) waterside in Warri South Local Government Area of Delta State.

"The vehicles and the products were moved to a safe place and destroyed. The suspects are in the custody of the JTF for preliminary investigation before handover to the prosecuting agency."