



DSS operative killed in fresh shootout between hoodlums, security agents

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fresh gun battle erupted last night between security agents and suspected hooligans ahead of today's crucial National Assembly and state legislative rerun elections in Rivers State.

A Department of State Services (DSS) official was feared killed in the confrontation at Egi in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area, barely 24 hours after an army major and a soldier were shot dead on the Abonnema-Kalabari waterways by people described as thugs, and a gang of gunmen beheaded a man at Mgbuitanwo in Emohua, Local Government area, hometown of the All Progressives Congress (APC) candidate for the Rivers East Senatorial rerun.

The Chief of Army Staff, Lt- Gen. Tukur Buratai, speaking yesterday in Owerri, Imo State on the killing of the soldiers, vowed that the "activities of pirates, criminals and bandits would be checked."

It was gathered that a team of security operatives was intercepted during a patrol at Egi last night by suspected hoodlums who allegedly opened fire, provoking a response from the security agents.

The DSS official was hit in the clash and he died immediately.



Confirming the incident, the Assistant Director, Army Public Relations of the 2 Brigade, Nigerian Army, Port Harcourt, Capt. Eli Lazarus said: "A joint security team, consisting of the army, police and DSS (Department of State Services), while conducting patrol today (yesterday) at Egi was attacked by unknown gunmen.

"The criminals engaged the security team for several hours before they were eventually dislodged. Sadly, a security agent lost his life in the unfortunate incident.

"Reinforcement has been sent to beef up security in the area and normalcy has been restored."

The army spokesman also admonished members of the public to remain calm and be law abiding throughout the election period and beyond, and pledged that security agents would continue to work assiduously to ensure security of lives and property.

Lazarus had on Thursday said soldiers were in pursuit of the brains behind the day's killings.

He said of the shootout: "At 11 am on March 17, 2016, troops on patrol along the waterways in the

general area of Abonnema had a fierce encounter with a group of unknown gunmen suspected to be sea pirates.

“Our men displayed extraordinary gallantry during the encounter.Unfortunately, an officer and a soldier, who sustained various degrees of injury lost their lives.”

And addressing officers and men of 34 Artillery Brigade headquarters, Obinze, Owerri, yesterday, Gen. Buratai said the military had commenced investigation into the Thursday incident.

He described the killing of the two soldiers as unfortunate and said the military had brought the situation in the area under control.

He said: “The situation in the Niger Delta is being addressed.

“The activities of pirates, criminals and bandits will be checked; our troops are fully on ground and they have arrested the situation.

“The unfortunate incident of Thursday in Rivers state is something that we are currently investigating.

“We will deal with the situation as investigation unfolds in the area.”

He assured the troops of government’s commitment to improve the condition of facilities in the barracks. Buratai said the welfare of troops and their families would be given priority by the President Muhammadu Buhari’s administration.

Buratai also inspected facilities at the barracks in Obinze.

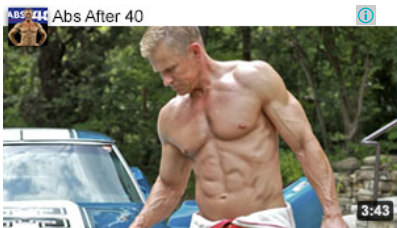
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