



## Tension in Bayelsa as gunmen kill three soldiers

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Gunmen suspected to be militants have killed three soldiers of the Joint Force (JF), Operation Pulo Shield (OPS) in Bayelsa State.

It was gathered that the gunmen overran a military outpost at Foropa, Southern Ijaw Local Government, and shot the soldiers.

The suspected militants reportedly took away two AK-47, a General Purpose Machine Gun (GPMG) and other ammunition at the Foropa checkpoint.

A top security source said the militants struck at 1.30 am yesterday in a surprise attack, adding that the soldiers could have been sleeping when the incident occurred.

He said: "It was a surprise attack. They opened fire, killing three of them and took away their arms."



The source said there had been planned attacks on security agents and formations by suspected militants.

He said: "The militants attack security agents, ostensibly to steal arms. Criminally-minded youths are stockpiling arms. This calls for vigilance among security operatives."

It was gathered that residents of Foropa are fleeing for fear of a military invasion and indiscriminate arrests.

The JTF was said to have evacuated the bodies of the slain soldiers before dawn.

Efforts to speak with the spokesman of the security outfit, Col. Isa Ado, were unsuccessful.

There has been widespread violence in the region, following the presence of a new militant group, Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), which claimed responsibilities for attacks on major oil installations in the region.

President Muhammadu Buhari ordered security chiefs to unmask those behind the militant group and stop the violence in the region.

Also, the Joint Task Force (JTF) Operation Pulo Shield yesterday confirmed that three soldiers attached to its command were killed by suspected militants.

The Coordinator of the Joint Media Campaign Centre (JMCC), Col. Isa Ado, said the soldiers were killed

in a gun duel with those he described as sea pirates and renegade militants.

He said: "At 100hours (1 a.m) of the day, sea pirates and renegade militants engaged our men at their location in Foropah community in a gun battle, which was a very intense situation.

"Some of our men were injured while three were killed. There were also casualties on the attackers' side, which I can confirm."

Asked if the military outfit was overwhelmed by the waves of attacks in the region, Ado said: "No, no. We can't be. We are on top of the situation.

"We are going to defeat them, like we did to Boko Haram terrorists. We shall continue to operate within our guidelines of operation to halt these hoodlums in the creeks very soon. Let the public and oil companies rest assured."

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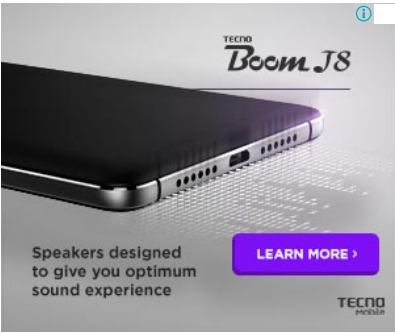
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