

Militants kill six soldiers in Bakassi

• 'Only one killed'

SUSPECTED militants led by the wanted kingpin, Benjamin Simplee (AKA G1), leader of the Bakassi Strike Force, reportedly killed six soldiers yesterday.

It was gathered the attack was on the troops deployed at Efut Esighi waterfront in Bakassi LGA of Cross River State.

Locals said the militants came in several speedboats to carry out the attack that also left two soldiers missing in action.

But the Nigerian Army, in a swift reaction, said only one soldier was killed.

A local source said: "Around 1am, the soldiers having their guards down, stormed where the soldiers were laying siege in his base in Isighi and shot five of them dead instantly.

From Nicholas Kalu, Calabar and Seun Akioye, Abuja

"The sixth one ran off with gunshot wounds but died later."

The development created panic in the area with residents expressing fears of reprisal attacks by the army.

The attackers, it was also learnt, burnt a buffalo pickup vehicle. Troops, however, killed two of the attackers while others escaped with gunshot wounds. But the reinforcement sent found the missing soldiers, army authorities said.

It was also gathered the troop's location has been reinforced with more gunboats and air component.

The clearance and pursuit operation is reportedly ongoing.

Acting Director, Army Public Relations, Colonel Sani Usman said: "We would like to assure the public that this singular act would not deter us from the discharge of our duties.

"Therefore, the perpetrators of this dastardly act would be found and brought to justice.

"The Nigerian Army wishes to send an unequivocal warning to all the criminal elements in the society that intent to attack any of its locations to have a rethink."

Commander 13 Brigade of the Nigerian Army in Calabar, Brigadier General Bulama Biu,

in a statement, said: "In the early morning hours of today, troops were attacked at Efut Isighi in Bakassi LGA by militant groups led by the most wanted leader Benjamin Simply alias G1.

"In the gun battle, one soldier was killed and a pickup van burnt. Two militants were killed while others fled with gunshot wounds.

"Troops have been fully mobilised and in pursuit of the militants.

"We want to assure law-abiding citizens to be calm and avail the military and security agencies with useful informing to help track these criminals.

"A coordinated joint military action is on going to hunt down these criminals no matter their hide outs."

Edo 2016: Oshiomhole, Igbinedion in war of words