

Army kills 4 kidnap suspects in Delta, arrests gang members

FOUR suspected kidnapers were yesterday shot dead by men of the Nigerian Army, 19 Battalion after a team of armed military men stormed their hideout. A soldier sustained serious injuries and is currently receiving treatment at an undisclosed hospital, **Okungbowa AIWERIE, Asaba** tal, *The Nation* learnt.

A suspect, identified as David Adogbeji, was arrested during the operation. *The Nation* gathered that the officers were ambushed by the gang

after a kidnap suspect volunteered to lead them to his gang's hideout in the creeks.

The suspect, Robinson Okotie, who was arrested at Ugbeyiyi junction in Sapele Local Government area, confessed to the killing of two soldiers on routine patrol along

Oyru creek.

The kidnap mastermind confessed to being a member of the Augustine Gbangbara group terrorising Sapele and the Benin River area.

The Nation gathered that other members of the gang escaped with

gun-shot wounds.

Efforts to reach the Commanding Officer, 19 Battalion, Lt Col Maaji Mohammed, was not successful.

The corpses of the kidnap suspects had been handed over to the Nigeria Police Divisional Headquarters, Koko, Warri North L.G.A.

Four Nigerians allegedly detained by Cameroonian authorities

Nicholas KALU, Calabar

THE National Coordinator of the Internally Displaced Persons of Bakassi, Prince Aston-Joseph Inyang, has raised the alarm over the alleged detention of four Nigerians from Bakassi by the Cameroonian authorities.

Inyang in a letter titled "Abuse of Human Rights" addressed to the team leader of the Cameroon/Nigeria Mixed Commission, made available to *The Nation* in Calabar alleged that the detention came on the heels of "forceful taxation" imposed on them.

According to him, the Nigerians, who were community leaders in the ceded Bakassi Peninsula, were going to be slammed with "false allegations" and made to face trial.

He said the names of the four detained are Bassey Ikoedem Utong, Ndung Ekpenyong Ndung, Joseph Ekpenyong Isang and Asukwo Isuo Atteh.

The letter dated August 16, 2017 read in part: "The four Nigerians have been detained for more than a week now, first in Diamond, later transferred to Jabanne later to Mudemba, the headquarters of Ndiang Division, to be taken to court for false allegations."

He complained that Nigerians from Bakassi Peninsula cried out about a month ago over eviction by Cameroon authorities over taxation and levies, and gathered in Ikang area of Cross River State and also in Esuk Ewang Mbo Local Government of Akwa Ibom State, without any attention given to them.

He debunked reports of killings in the peninsula, saying the issues were as a result of undue levies, destruction of fishing equipment and restriction of the Nigerian people to fish in the waters.

"There is no freedom, but forceful extortion and slavery of the people. This is the bone of contention. Sir we plead that you use your good office and intervene. Let justice prevail. It is a matter of urgent attention. Their wives and children are crying," Inyang said.

Edo to deal with operators of illegal commercial toilets

Edo State government said it would deal with operators of illegal commercial toilets in markets across the state. The government said many of the illegal commercial toilets were unkempt and found to be disposing excreta, and silt into public drains.

The state Commissioner for Environment and Sustainability, Hon. Reginald Okun, gave the threat when he led a team of health officials to seal some of the toilets.

Okun said the steps were to ensure a clean and orderly city adding that default-



Some drums containing parts of 71,500 litres of adulterated petroleum products which were impounded by Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps on Ikot Udoma Street in Eket, Cross River...yesterday

NSCDC intercepts stolen oil loaded in govt vehicle, arrests suspects

THE Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Bayelsa State Command, has intercepted stolen petroleum products conveyed in a vehicle belonging to the Ministry of Mines and Steel Development.

It was gathered that the vehicle, a Toyota Hilux van, which was used by the suspects to beat security checkpoints, was rounded up on Thursday in Yenagoa, by the anti-vandal team of the NSCDC.

One of the suspects identified as Philip Tuma, confessed that he worked in the ministry and was allowed by the ministry's authority to keep the vehicle marked 28A-36FG in his care.

He, however, said his boss in the ministry knew nothing about his illegal mission of using the vehicle to transport

Mike ODIEGWU, Yenagoa stolen oil.

Tuma said he embarked on the dirty deal in connivance with his younger brothers, who were idle following the ongoing strike embarked upon by members of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

"I work in the ministry and was given the bus to keep as a worker. My boss has no knowledge of what I have done. This is my first time."

"My younger ones, who are at home because of the ASUU strike convinced me to follow them because they needed money for their fees," he said.

Also, a female suspect, Mercy Ekereme, paraded for her alleged involvement in illegal bunkering, said she was arrested by NSCDC

while trying to convey the products from Ogbia to Yenagoa.

Ekereme, who hailed from Delta State, said she was once a hawker of sachet water but was introduced into the oil theft business by an unnamed woman.

"The woman who introduced me to this oil business saw me selling pure water and said my pure water business was embarrassing. She helped me to get a loan and linked me with a dealer who gives me products to sell."

"I got the product and decided to take them to Yenagoa. I met a man who came to buy fuel into a Hilux vehicle for his boss. We agreed on a fare and he decided to carry the products to Yenagoa but we were arrested at Okaki," she said.

Speaking shortly after de-

stroying some of the impounded products, the Deputy Commandant, NSCDC, Mr. Chikere Isidore, said the suspects would be prosecuted.

"We are always on their trail and each time we intercept them, we arrest and prosecute them. You can see the suspects carried some of their products in a van of a known ministry to escape arrest. But they failed. Our men are always on the lookout," he said.

He said some of the impounded products were burnt because they were abandoned by suspects, who ran away on sighting operatives of the NSCDC.

He, however, said that other products at the command were arrested with their owners and were used as exhibits in court.

Delta APC blasts Okowa over job creation claims

THE All Progressives Congress (APC) in Delta State has blasted the Governor Ifeanyi Okowa led administration over claims that it has created 42,169 jobs since assumption of office.

The APC described the claims as "bogus, laughable and unsubstantiated."

Okungbowa AIWERIE, Asaba

It will be recalled that Delta Commissioner of Information, Mr. Patrick Ukah had at a press briefing recently in Asaba-the Delta State capital said that the state government had created 42,169 jobs under the

Okowa regime.

The Publicity Secretary of the APC in Delta State, Mr. Leo Obibi, who spoke with *The Nation* yesterday pointed out the discrepancies in the statement credited to the commissioner and the admission by Okowa recently on television that his administration had created 3,000 jobs.

"The claim by the commissioner that the state government has created over 43,000 jobs is laughable. The governor himself was on television and claimed he has generated something over 3,000 jobs," Obibi remarked.

While decrying the governor's job creation strategies, Obibi, urged the state government to undertake strategic development plans that could stimulate businesses. He said: "Doing contracted

training for some youths on makeshift farms in the backyard of their homes is a job for local government councils and not the state government."

Obibi also debunked claims by the state government that it had constructed 98 roads totaling 612 km and drains covering 300 km.

His words: "Governor Okowa claims he has fixed 98 roads and drainage projects, but we are not concerned about the numbers because even a tiny 300m road can be called a project. The point of concern is the wastage of the people's resources. Many of the roads have failed in less than six months, just as the drainage are inadequate and sub-standard, which is why you have flooding all over the place."

'Wike is determined to make a mark, leave legacies in Rivers'

Bisi OLANIYI, Port Harcourt

THE umbrella organisation of professionals, practitioners and stakeholders of the Nigerian Maritime Economy (NIME), the Marine Club of Nigeria (MCN), has stated that the Rivers State Governor, Chief Nyesom Wike, is determined to make a mark and leave legacies in the Niger Delta state.

The group also noted that Wike, is making Rivers to be more secure.

The President of MCN, Dr. Chinedu Jideofe-Ogbuagu, yesterday in an interactive session with reporters in Port Harcourt, urged the Rivers governor to allocate navigable waterfront land in Port Harcourt to the association to establish a free trade zone, in order to provide employment opportunities for the teeming qualified youths.

Besides the Oil and Gas Free Zone in Onne, Eleme Local Government Area of the state, for oil and gas cargoes, he stated that the state could have many free trade zones, like Lagos State with 10 functional free trade zones, thereby promoting economic and industrial activities, adding that NIME is 60-75 per cent of the entire Nigerian economy.

FG appoints Obaseki substantive CMD of UBTH

Osagie OTABOR, Benin

THE Federal Government has appointed Dr. Darlington Obaseki as the substantive Chief Medical Director (CMD) of the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH).

The letter of appointment was issued on Thursday to Dr. Obaseki by the Minister of Health, Prof. Isaac Adewole.

Until his appointment, Dr. Obaseki was the Acting CMD of the hospital following the expiration of the tenure of Prof. Michael Ibadin.

Dr. Obaseki in a chat with newsmen promised to strengthen ongoing reforms to make UBTH the best hospital in the country.

"I give God the glory and thank the Federal Government for the opportunity given to me to lead this institution for another four years."

"I am going to work with my team and the entire staff of this hospital to achieve greater success."

"You can see that we are enjoying tremendous support from our staff and we intend to continue, improve the welfare of our staff so we can give better service to patients and also improve our infrastructures for better service delivery," he stated.