

Gunmen kill two soldiers in Abia, two students in Delta

① **G**UNMEN suspected to be members of the proscribed Eastern Security Network (ESN) and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) have attacked an army checkpoint in Abia State.

Two soldiers were killed in a fierce gun battle between the gunmen and soldiers of the 14 Brigade headquarters, Ohafia at the checkpoint.

Our correspondent gathered that the incident happened yesterday morning at the army checkpoint located at the Carpenter Shed, Ekenobizi, Umuopara, Umuahia South local government area axis of the popular Onuimo Bridge; a popular boundary between Abia State and Imo State.

The incident, sources disclosed happened at about 6:18am, forcing road users and traders around to scamper for safety as gun shots rent the air.

From Sunny Nwankwo, Umuahia and Okungbowa Aiwerie, Asaba

The checkpoint, it gathered, was setup last Thursday as a measure to improve security in the state.

Lt. Col. Jonah Unuakhalu Onah in a statement on behalf of Joint Task Force South East Operation UDO KA confirmed the attack.

Onah said "the gallant troops repelled the attack forcing the irredentist IPOB and ESN to withdraw in disarray with gunshot wounds, abandoning one Sienna and one Lexus Jeep vehicles that were used for the attack. However, in the ensuing firefight two soldiers paid the supreme price.

"The Joint Task Force Southeast Operation UDO KA is calling and appealing to the good people of the Southeast especially residents

of Abia State with relevant, reliable and credible information that could help in apprehending the fleeing members of the irredentist group who committed this heinous crime and also help to annihilate the criminals in the region.

"The Joint Task Force Southeast Operation UDO KA will continue to carry out its constitutional roles of safeguarding lives and property in line with global best practice as laid down in the rules of engagement guiding its operations."

② The Nation has learnt some gunmen murdered two students of Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku, Aniocha South Local Government Area.

It was gathered that two other students were taken away to un-

known destination, with a N30 million ransom demanded by the kidnappers to free the abducted students.

The incident, which occurred on Sunday, has caused anxiety in the community.

A source who spoke on condition of anonymity said the incident occurred at a hostel outside the school, adding that one of the victims was an ex-student of the school.

Delta State Police Command spokesman, Bright Edafe, a Superintendent, who confirmed the incident, said he was unaware that a ransom is being demanded for the release of the abductees.

According to him, preliminary investigations showed that the killings may be cult related.

He said investigations were ongoing to unravel the masterminds of the incident.