

Militants kill Lebanese, abduct two Italians

The violence in the Niger Delta assumed a frightening dimension on Friday morning when gunmen suspected to be militants shot and killed a Lebanese and wounded another in

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consultations with stakeholders, including politicians, opinion and religious leaders. Specifically, he had useful, but separate discussions with Christian and Moslem leaders, whom he told of his plans for the encouragement of peaceful and harmonious relationship between the two leading religions.

"He secured a firm commitment from them that the religious divide of the past would be put behind by everyone.

"The theme of Governor Yar'Adua's consultations was the need for peaceful coexistence, based on equity and social justice for all persons, particularly the youth; whom he said, had for long be neglected and, therefore, needed to be rehabilitated through the provision of qualitative and functional education as well as gainful employment."

**Soni Daniel,
Port Harcourt**

Isiokpo, the headquarters of Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Police sources said the two construction workers were being taken to work by a Nigerian driver when the gunmen attacked them. They were working with a construction firm, AUC, in Aluu, near the University of Port Harcourt.

A source said one of the Lebanese died on the spot while the other and the Nigerian driver were seriously wounded by the militants. While the militants were attacking the Lebanese in Isiokpo, another set of gunmen numbering seven were reportedly trailing some Italian workers working on the Ogoni-Bodo-Bonny Road.

The gunmen succeeded in making away with two of the foreign construction workers, who work for construction firm, Impregilo. Their names were given to *Agence France Presse* by Italy's Deputy Foreign Minister, Franco Danieli, as Lucio Moro and Luciano Passarin.

Rivers State Police Commissioner, Mr. Felix

Ogbaudu, confirmed the attacks but did not give details. Spokesperson for the command, Mrs. Ireju Barasua, said the command was following the development and would speak later.

A series of attacks has been launched on foreign workers in the state lately, raising fears that the militants have become almost invincible. Last Sunday, gunmen took into their custody four missionaries working with the Church of Jesus Christ for the Latter Day Saints in Emuohua Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Militants had earlier in the year abducted five Chinese telecommunications workers in the same local government area, and detained them for close to three weeks before releasing them.

Meanwhile, heavy fighting between the people of Bodo and their Mogho neighbours in Gokana Local Government Area reportedly led to the death of seven persons. The fighting was said to be over the ownership of land between the two Ogoni neighbours.

Riot and regular policemen were deployed in the area to quell the riot.