

Militants kill four riot policemen in Rivers

Stories: **Soni Daniel,**
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GUNMEN suspected to be Niger Delta militants on Tuesday morning, shot and killed four riot policemen at the Ogbakiri Junction in Ernuohua Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Ogbakiri is one of the major bases of militants and home to Prince Igodo, who was declared wanted by the State Security Service last Sunday.

The community has been at the centre of series of abduction of foreign oil workers and a base for detaining most of the abductees in the state.

Eyewitnesses said the four policemen were lured and killed around 4 am on Tuesday by the armed men who posed as soldiers.

According to one source, the militants stormed the junction where the riot policemen

were having a regular check-point and asked the victims to identify themselves.

Believing that the men were soldiers and members of the Joint Task Force, the policemen moved towards the gunmen's vehicle and introduced themselves before they were fired at close range by their attackers.

The four reportedly died on the spot while the militants collected their rifles, left their corpses on the roadside and sped off to an unknown destination.

When contacted, the Commissioner of Police, Rivers State Command, Mr. Felix Ogbaudu, confirmed the attack, but said that he was far away in Abuja and did not have the details of the incident.

Ogbaudu, who referred our correspondent to another top police officer for details, however, said that the com-

mand had begun investigation into the circumstances leading to the policemen's death.

The killing may not be unconnected with the declaration of Igodo wanted by the SSS.

The Director of the SSS in Rivers State, Mr. Kola Adesina, had on Sunday, placed the sum of N5m on Igodo, saying that he was linked to almost all the kidnappings of oil workers, armed robberies and other forms of atrocities in the state.

Two suspects-Nnamdi Emeh and Ibebuka Ekene, paraded by the SSS as some of Igodo's boys, implicated the man who was one of those who aspired for the governorship seat of the state but failed to clinch the ticket of any party.

They claimed that Igodo, who also supplied the arms used for the attack, coordinated the abduction.