

Firm accuses Navy of killing of Ghanaian national

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THE management of Ikpanayo Fishing Company on Wednesday accused the Nigerian Navy of killing one of its Ghanaian employees and arresting three others at the Sombriero River in Rivers State.

The Managing Director of the fishing firm, Chief Young Tobin, who addressed journalists in Port Harcourt, said neither the man, who was shot nor the three others arrested by naval officers were pirates.

He said that the four men were Ghanaian nationals in the employ of his firm and were on the river carrying out their legitimate business before they were confronted by the security operatives.

The Nigerian Navy

component of the Joint Task Force in Rivers State had on Monday, said it had killed one suspected pirate and arrested three others during its operations along the Bonny waterway.

The Public Relations Officer of the NN Pathfinder, Lt. Way Olabisi, had told newsmen that his colleagues encountered four suspected pirates along the river.

He said the pirates opened fire on the NNS Kwayeh, used by the naval men as soon as they spotted it, a situation which led to an exchange of gunfire.

After a gun duel, he said one of the pirates was killed while three others were arrested and would soon be handed over to the police for prosecution.

He gave the names of the suspected pirates as Marthy Anas, Isaac Okoh and Kwame Anto.

But their employer, who has since petitioned the Rivers State Governor, Chief Rotimi Amaechi, and the Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Mike Okiro, disagreed with Olabisi on the matter.

He said that the four Ghanaians had been the firm's employers in the past four years and were involved in deep sea fishing when they were attacked by the naval men.

He described as "absolute falsehood, the claim that the fishermen opened fire on the naval personnel, adding that in 2006, the Nigeria Navy exonerated them from involvement in piracy.

Said Tobin, "The three surviving men and the dead one are Ghanaian nationals residing in Finima, Bonny Local Government Area. All of them are well known and acquainted with members of Finima community."