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Search

JTF kills 12, arrests 48 suspected militants, bunkerers

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The Joint Task Force in the Niger Delta, during separate early morning raids on Thursday, killed 12 suspected militants and arrested 48 others in Bayelsa and Rivers states.



Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Andrew Oweye-Azazi

The operatives of the security agency reportedly carried out the cordon-and search- operation in order to apprehend the masterminds of the recent killing of three soldiers and four civilians in the coastal areas of Bayelsa State.

Already, five corpses have been recovered by the search parties raised by the authorities of the JTF and the government of Bayelsa State.

Findings by our correspondent at 93 Battalion, Effurun, the headquarters of JTF Op RH, on Thursday, showed that 25 suspected militants were arrested during the military operation.

Some houses were also burnt during the military action, which started at 1am and ended at 6am.

Those arrested were in the custody of Port Harcourt based- JTF Op Flush Out 111 in Elele, near the Rivers State capital.

Meanwhile, the JTF, in the Rivers' incident, arrested 23 suspected militants and illegal oil bunkerers in Elele, Alimini and Rumuji communities.

Our correspondent learnt that the raid was jointly carried out by troops from the Operation Flush Out III, based in Rivers State and Operation Restore Hope, based in Delta State.

Over 30 heavily-armed men had on Friday, July 11, invaded a road camp belonging to Julius Berger Nigeria Limited and abducted two German nationals after killing a soldier.

The road camp which is located near the Rumuji Police Station came under heavy attack just as the expatriates arrived for work with their military escorts.

The gunmen, who were suspected to be members of the surrounding communities, later escaped through the creek with the German hostages.

But a source said troops arrived at the communities at about 1.am and cordoned off some of the areas suspected to harbour notorious oil bunkerers and cultists.

He said the raid might have been carried out based on information that some hardened cultists and militants were operating within the three communities.

According to the source, over seven houses were raided in Alimini including one which went up in flames.

He said several drums of bunkered petrol and condensate which were stored in the compound caught fire when troops tried to destroy the containers but no life was lost during the inferno.

The troops also raided another major bunkering location in Rumuekpe community and arrested many persons suspected to be involved in oil theft.

When contacted on the telephone, the JTF's spokesman in Rivers State, Lt. Col. Sagir Musa, confirmed the raid to our correspondent.

He said the raid was conducted based on intelligence report that there were concentrations of militants and oil thieves in the affected communities.

Musa said troops conducted a cordon-and-search operation in some designated compounds in the three communities and in the process arrested 23 suspects.

He said, "The 23 suspects are currently giving useful information to the relevant organ of the JTF, Operation Flush Out III. But as the tradition is, all of them will soon be prosecuted.

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"Additionally, a notorious Rumuekpe bunkering site was raided and there was a weak resistance by the militants there. No life was lost throughout the entire operation."

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