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## Four killed as JTF, youths clash

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Published: Sunday, 8 Feb 2009

A detachment of the Joint Task Force in the Niger Delta, Operation Restore Hope and some heavily-armed youths, on Saturday morning engaged in fierce gun battle in Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta State.



Niger Delta Militant

Photo file

It was learnt that four of the recalcitrant youths were killed while one soldier was injured at the end of the gun battle.

Besides, Sunday Punch gathered that one of the youths was arrested.

Our correspondent gathered that the injured soldier and the youth were recuperating at a medical centre in Warri, Delta State, at press time on Saturday.

Findings further showed that the armed youths had planned to attack the Utorogun Gas Plant owned by the Anglo-Dutch oil firm, in Otujeremi, the headquarters of Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta State, before the federal troops repelled them

It would be recalled that some men and women from Uvwiamuge/Ekakpamre communities in Ughelli North and South Local Government Areas of Delta State respectively, had protested the paltry sum payable to the indigenous owners of the land in which Shell Petroleum Development Company operated in the area on Tuesday.

The protesters had rejected the N40 per hectare per annum in the last 45 years.

However, it was not certain if the same protesters were responsible for the attack on the gas facility on Tuesday.

Investigations revealed that some armed youths had stormed the Ughelli Gas Plant as early as 4:30am on Saturday.

Although the mission of the youths could not be immediately ascertained, it was learnt that they attempted to attack the gas plant before the operatives of JTF in the area confronted them.

A gun duel reportedly ensued between them, a development which led to a free for all in which lethal weapons were freely used by the two combating groups.

A source said that the injured youth would provide the lead to the uncovering of his collaborators on Saturday evening.

Sunday Punch could not ascertain the extent of damage on the Anglo-Dutch facility before the intervention of the federal troops.

Our correspondent could not get the reaction of either the Commander of the Joint Task Force in the Niger Delta, Operation Restore Hope, Brig.-Gen. Wuyep Rintip or the Coordinator, Joint Media Campaign Centre of JTF, Col. Rabe Abubakar, before press time on Saturday.

Both of them declined to pick calls sent to their mobile phones on Saturday.

Abubakar was reported to have led some journalists to a riverside location when Sunday Punch called at his office in 3 Battalion, Effurun, Delta State, on Saturday evening.

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However, a source close confirmed the report.

The source, which pleaded anonymity, said the injured youth would be interrogated with a view to eliciting information on the masterminds of the dastardly development.

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