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JTF, militants in gun duel

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The troops of the Joint Task Force in the Niger Delta, Operation Restore Hope, and the warlords in the region on Monday clashed at a flow station operated by Nest Oil in Nembe, Bayelsa State.

It was gathered that the federal troops confronted the militants who stormed the oil platform at 4am, a development which led to serious exchange of gunshots between the two groups.

Our correspondent learnt that the shoot-out lasted for about 45 minutes before the warlords succumbed to the superior fire power of the federal troops.

Security sources said that three of the youths were killed at the end of the gun battle while two of the soldiers sustained serious injuries.

One of the sources said, "Some recalcitrant youths stormed the Nembe oil production platforms of Nest Oil this (Monday) morning and as usual, the troops stationed in the location repelled them. It was a serious gun battle with the youths but they were forced to retreat at the end of the day.

"The youths learnt their lesson in a hard way this time around as three of them were killed in the gun battle. Two of the federal troops merely sustained minor injuries and they have been treated and discharged."

The Coordinator, Joint Media Campaign Centre, JTF, Col. Rabe Abubakar, said the federal troops repelled the invaders.

He said, "They fired several shots at the flow station with the aim of destroying it, but their plans were repelled by men of the JTF deployed there. The company's facilities remain intact, there was no casualty on our side.

"However, the JTF is hereby warning militants, illegal oil bunkerers and miscreants, to retrace their steps as the force is always ready to stand tall to its responsibilities in the Niger Delta.

"It is becoming worrisome to note that even as the government is striving hard to bring development closer to the common people in the region, some self-centered groups, for their selfish interests, are bent on making condition difficult and the government's laudable programmes unattainable, in order to continue with their illicit business.

"The JTF will continue to intensify its modus-operandi in defending lives and property of government and other multinationals, be it oil or construction companies."

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