

Five feared killed in renewed hostility

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Hheavy fighting among militants, pirates and the Joint Task Force in the Niger Delta left no fewer than five people dead on Friday in Letugbene, Ekeremor Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

As at the time of this report, heavy sound of automatic gun fire could still be heard from the creeks.

Although the Coordinator of the JTF Media Campaign Centre, Col Rabe Abubakar, said the militants were from the camp of Boyloaf in Ogbotobo community, Bayelsa State, sources told

our correspondent that the heavy fighting took place in Letugbene. Usually reliable sources from the creeks said among the casualties in the offensive were two militants, a community chief and soldiers guarding the Ogbotobo flow station in Letugbene.

Our correspondent gathered that the people of Letugbene had arrested the pirates that had plundered a passenger boat late on Thursday night and had sent emissaries to the JTF location at Ogbotobo to hand over the pirates to them.

The party was, however, intercepted by a boat that arrived the scene in the most

threatening manner to open fire on the military gun boat that had berthed at the Letugbene water front.

Among the casualties in the shoot out was the Chief Maureen Kurobo, who was in company of the JTF to place the pirates under arrest.

But Abubakar in reaction to the incident confirmed that five people were killed while one soldier sustained gun shot injuries.

He said, "Troops of the JTF were ambushed at about 12:09 today, June 12, 2009, by militants from Boyloaf Camp at Ogbotobo community in Bayelsa State. The men of the security outfit

were attacked by the militants when we were returning from Ogbotobo Community to secure items recovered from suspected militants by vigilante group of the community.

The members of the

June 12 has strengthened democracy – PDP

The Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party in Lagos State, Chief Setonji Koshedo, on Friday said that the June 12, 1993 election has greatly helped to strengthened democracy in the country.

He noted in a statement signed by the state publicity secretary, Dr. Wale Ahmed, that in spite of the

community arrested the militants who invaded their community to foment trouble and to establish a base there, but they refused and arrested them," he said. Abubakar also appealed to all peace loving people in the area to expose the militants and other criminal elements in the

disappointment with the annulment of the election, the events of the date have enhanced the nation's political and democratic development.

Koshedo said, "We may have had our disappointments with the annulment of the June 12, 1993 general elections, but the events surrounding this date have helped to strengthened democracy and

communities for lasting peace to reign in the area.

"The JTF will defend any group and communities that assisted it in getting rid of the criminals, because we believe it is only when there is peace and security that development will come to any region or nation," he said.

our political development.

"As a people and nation, we have benefited from June 12, to the extent that we continue to consolidate on the merits of democracy. By letting our values, particularly at leadership level, tally with our convictions that the voices of the people must always count in our elections and outcomes," he said.