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Gunmen kill four soldiers, four policemen in Bayelsa

March 2, 2012 by Mike Odiegwu, Yenagoa [94 Comments](#)



GUNMEN on Thursday unleashed terror on security operatives in Bayelsa State, killing four soldiers and four policemen at different points along the state's waterways.

Among the killed soldiers was a Lieutenant-Colonel.

The attack on the security operatives came barely a few hours after explosives suspected to be dynamites were detonated at two different locations in [Yenagoa](#), the state capital.

Two [oil pipelines](#) belonging to the Nigerian Agip Oil Company were also attacked by yet unknown persons in the gale of violence unleashed on the state.

Our correspondent gathered that unidentified gunmen operating on three speedboats

attacked four soldiers attached to the Joint Task Force, codenamed Operation Pulo Shield, in the Niger Delta region.

A security source said the soldiers were waylaid by the bandits between Brass and Ogbia waterways. Identities of the killed soldiers were not known as at the time of this report.

The source, who pleaded anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter, explained that the soldiers who were heading for Ogbia waterside on a speedboat were accosted at a point popularly called Right Hand on the waterways.

“The gunmen in three speedboats accelerated towards the soldiers who were going to Ogbia waterside and opened fire on them. The soldiers were taken by surprise and they could not react quickly. After shooting the soldiers, the gunmen immediately fled the scene”, the source said.

He said the incident happened around 10am, adding that the shooting created panic in the area.

While the dust raised by the killing of the soldiers had yet to settle, four marine policemen, in a separate attack, were shot dead by bandits who were suspected to be the same as those who murdered the soldiers.

The victims, our correspondent gathered, were attacked at a police post along the Nembe waterways.

A police source told our correspondent that the bandits disguised as travellers but on getting close to the checkpoint pulled out their guns and opened fire on the officers.

The source who said his name should not be mentioned because he was not authorised to speak on the matter added that after the incident four bodies of the victims were recovered from the water.

The incident, it was learnt, rattled the state police command, especially, the new Commissioner of Police, Mr. Chris Olakpe, who has been commended by his superiors for the peaceful conduct of the February 11 governorship election in the state.

When our correspondent visited the command, Olakpe was said not to be in a mood to talk. But the Police Public Relations Officer in the state, Mr. Egoavoen Emokpai, confirmed the development and said soldiers and police officers were combing the areas for the culprits.

But the Media Coordinator, JTF, Lt. Col. Timothy Anthigha, said information regarding the killing of the soldiers was still sketchy.

“There are unconfirmed reports about an armed attack on a passenger boat which was carrying some military personnel this morning. The attack is suspected to have been carried out by some unknown gunmen. We don’t have any information on any casualty and we don’t have any information on where the passengers are. We are awaiting information from the unit closest to the scene of the incident,” Anthigha said.

But a source at the State Security Service confirmed the report to our correspondent and said a lieutenant colonel was among the four soldiers killed in the passenger boat.

He also told our correspondent that unknown bandits attacked two pipelines belonging to

Agip at Oglobiri in Brass Local Government Area and Tundaba in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of the state on Wednesday.

“We are suspecting that the attack on the soldiers was carried out by those dealing in illegal oil bunkering. The lieutenant-colonel who is a commanding officer of JTF has been tough on illegal oil business going on in the region. He must have been killed because of his toughness”, the source said.

Meanwhile, the explosives which were detonated in Yenagoa on Wednesday night caused panic around Opolo and Customs roads.

No casualty was recorded in the two separate blasts.

The first explosion was said to have occurred in Opolo around 12.45am. The scene is close to Diete Koki Memorial Hospital and not far from the Headquarters of JTF in the state.

Our correspondent gathered that the explosive was thrown close to a transformer and that the impact affected the security building of the hospital.

Our correspondent who visited the area observed that part of the roof of the security building was damaged by the explosion just as it drilled a hole on the concreted floor.

One of the workers in the hospital, who identified himself simply as Ishmaila said the building was shaken by the explosion, adding that security operatives inspected the area on Thursday morning.

The Opolo blast came shortly after another explosion rattled the residents of Customs Road at about 9.30pm.

It was gathered that an unknown person on a speeding motorcycle threw the dynamite.

Olakpe, who spoke to our correspondent shortly after the explosion, said the explosions were the handiwork of mischief makers who were on a mission to seek attention.

He said people should disregard the incident and go about their normal business. He vowed to unmask the identities of the attackers.

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