

Gunmen attack Jonathan's residence, Buhari, Lawan lament

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Goodluck Jonathan

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Gunmen on Tuesday attacked the Otuoke country home of former President Goodluck Jonathan in the Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

It was gathered that the bandits invaded Jonathan's home at about 3am.

They were said to have used a ferry to navigate their way to the former President's riverside residence and opened fire on the soldiers on guard, ostensibly to gain entry into the building.

The attack has however generated a public outcry as Nigerians led by the President, Major General Muhammadu Buhari (retd.) and the Senate President, Ahmed Lawan, condemned the attack, describing it as tragic and unfortunate.

There were conflicting reports on the number of casualties as a result of the armed invasion of the former President's residence.

While a source said one soldier was killed and another one injured, another source claimed that three soldiers and one person were killed in the attack.

But Jonathan was said to have escaped unhurt in the attack, which some community persons described as “an assassination attempt” on the former President.

The incident was said to have caused panic among residents of the community.

Shortly after the incident, the Joint Task Force in the Niger Delta codenamed *Operation Delta Safe* reinforced deployment of troops in the area who cordoned off the roads.

Tuesday's violent attack on Jonathan's Otuoke residence was the second in 12 years as the same home was invaded by militants on April 20, 2007 before the presidential election of that year.

The spokesman for the *Operation Delta Safe*, Major John Unuakhalum, who confirmed the incident in a statement on Tuesday, said the gunmen also attacked the security outfit's “gunboat deployed close to the house of former President Goodluck Jonathan.”

He said, “The vigilant troops repelled the attack while some of the assailants escaped with gunshot wounds. However, during the attack, one soldier paid the supreme price and another one was wounded in action. The wounded soldier has been evacuated to the hospital and is responding to treatment.”

Unuakhalum said preliminary investigations had commenced “to identify the persons or group of persons behind the attack.”

Buhari on Tuesday after receiving the news of the attack, called Jonathan on the telephone to sympathise with him.

A State House statement by Buhari's media aide, Mr Garba Shehu, said he described the attack as “tragic and unfortunate.”

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The Presidency stated, “While commending the soldiers on guard for bravely repelling the attack, the President condoled with the family members as well as officers and men of the Nigerian Army over the loss of one of the guards.

“President Buhari assured Nigerians that the protection of the life of the former leader and all citizens of the country will continue to be the major preoccupation of his administration.”

Also, the Senate President, according to a statement by his media aide, Ola Awoniyi, described the attack as despicable.

In his own reaction, the Chairman, Board of Trustees of the Peoples Democratic Party, Senator Walid Jibrin, described the attack as troubling, unacceptable and unfortunate.