

2 soldiers killed as gunmen abduct two expatriates in Bayelsa

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From **Femi Folaranmi**, Yenagoa

LESS than 24 hours after troops of the Operation Pulo Shield rescued a soldiers who was abducted by sea-pirates, two soldiers were feared killed yesterday in Nembe, Nembe Local Government Area of Bayelsa State as suspected kidnappers abducted two expatriates along the Nembe road.

The expatriates whose name have not being revealed were drafted by construction giant Steraco to supervise the on going repairs of the road.

According to investigations, six armed men had laid ambush for their victims along the road and when the Hilux Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) conveying the victims was in their view, they opened fire.

Though, the soldiers attempted to repel the kidnappers, they were overpowered as the assailants shot two of them dead and escaped with the expatriates.

“The armed men laid ambush along the road. And on sighting the Hilux SUV in which the expatriate were seated, they opened fire, shooting sporadically. The soldiers could not match their shooting and one of the soldiers was hit. The kidnappers took the expatriate with the Hilux SUV and when they got to Nembe Bassambiri, they took the expatriates into their boat and escaped” witness said.

Another witness said the soldiers, who were attached as security details of the Setraco personnel on the site of the road project, came under heavy fire from the bush, “it was an ambush and they did not notice. A Sergeant and a Private were killed in the shootout”.

Some of the Indigenes of Nembe kingdom returning to Yenagoa en-route Opume road, were caught in the early morning shoot out.

A Hilux SUV driver identified as Monday said, “it was like a movie scene. The soldiers were shooting and the armed men were shooting. We later saw signs of blood everywhere, when the soldiers removed their blood soaked colleagues and the expatriates.”

The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr Asinim Butswat who confirmed the incident said the Police are not aware of the death of soldiers.

Butswat, who appealed for calm explained that the police have commenced investigations.