

6 militants killed in Rivers

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From **Tony John**, Port Harcourt

At least six suspected militants have been reportedly shot dead by security operatives in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State during a joint operation in the area. The incident occurred in the early hours of yesterday.

There were conflicting reports, about the survival of the dreaded ex-militant leader in the area, General Don Waney, in the gun duel that lasted for hours. Waney was said to have been shot dead and his corpse carried away during the operation around Ali-Ugo junction.

But, it was gathered evening from one of the former militant leader's lieutenants, who confirmed the attack by security agents, that "our boss is alive and not dead."

Earlier, there was jubilation in Omoku, headquarters of ONELGA, when the news filtered in that Waney, was among the persons that were killed. But it was later told that the gang leader had fallen into a river after he was shot.

The security raid followed the killing of three members of ONELGA local vigilance known as Security Planning and Advisory Committee (OSPAC) recently.

The outfit was set up by the authority of the local government council to assist in tackling insecurity in the area.

Gunmen had on Saturday night invaded Okposi and Omoku communities and killed the three OSPAC members and another individual, causing panic in the area.

Waney and his gang, who had surrendered their arms to the state government, last year, during the state amnesty programme, were accused of masterminding the killings and were allegedly mobilizing to lunch attacks in different communities of the LGA before the clamp down by the joint force.

It was learned that the group had allegedly resolved to destabilize the security formation put in place by the Caretaker committee Chairman of ONELGA, Osi Olisa, in order to resume their activities.

It was further gathered that while the hoodlums were on with their plans, security operatives including, the police, army, Department of State Security, DSS, Joint Military Task Force (JTF) and OSPAC, stormed their camp and allegedly killed a number of persons.

When contacted on the alleged killing of Waney, the Public Relations Officer of Rivers State Police Command, DSP Nnamdi Omoni, said the information on the incident was sketchy, adding that a formal statement would be released when details were gathered.

Meanwhile, the Caretaker Committee Chairman ONELGA, Olisa, has assured that the security of the LGA could not be compromised, adding that efforts would continue to build a formidable security structure in the area