

# 'Peculiar terrain of Oluasiri makes it ideal place for criminals'

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as human shield by the suspected criminals were caught. The names of the dead included Mr. Wilson Patason, Christian Gamage, Madam Beauty and her six months old baby. Many others were also confirmed to be in critical condition having sustained various levels of injuries.

The peculiar terrain of Oluasiri clan makes it an ideal place for criminals. It is situated between Rivers State and Bayelsa State which ordinarily should call for security concern. But the opposite is the case. There is no security post in the area making it attractive to suspected oil bunkers.

According to security sources, "the security operation was launched to dislodge the suspected militants and sea pirates hiding in the community" but troops were attacked by the suspected hoodlums. However indigenes of the community debunked the claim and insisted that the military attack was unprovoked.

"The armed militants were re-

siding in the community forcefully. The Armed militants had become lawless and this may have caused the security operations. But as you know, these boys also pay some military men and may have been tipped off by some of their military friends. They had left the community before soldiers arrived. The soldiers arrived in six gun boats and started shooting indiscriminately. It is sad and unprofessional."

The Oluasiri clan described as "reckless and nefarious" the wanton invasion of Ben-Ama and Tengele-Ama by troops, which reportedly left four persons dead.

The clan in a statement jointly signed by the President of Oluasiri Development Union, Deacon Gamage Difurotogu, and the President of Oluasiri Youth Federation, Kienworio Tanga called on the Federal Government and Civil Liberty Organisations (CLO) to carry out an investigation to unravel the mysteries behind the ugly incident.

They stated categorically that the people of Oluasiri were always ready to support the Nigerian military and other security agencies

in the fight against oil bunkering, sea piracy and kidnapping, but pleaded that such should be done in complete adherence to international best practices, while upholding the sanctity of human life.

CLO through its Bayelsa Chapter Chairman, Chief Nengi James described the invasion as barbaric and unprofessional.

Also reacting, the Ijaw Youths Council (IYC) worldwide, through its president, Eric Omore condemned the invasion and charged the military authorities to comply with the rules of engagement in their operations in the Niger Delta.

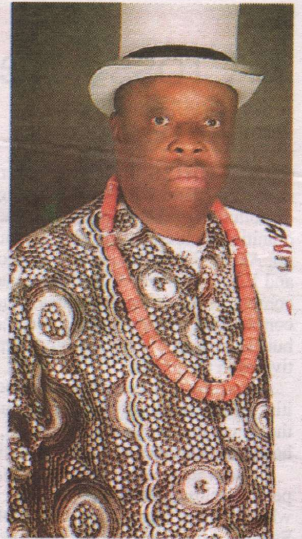
"It is only in the Niger Delta that soldiers routinely kill innocent people in the name of looking for criminals. The invasion of Ben-Ama and Tengele-Ama Communities in Oluasiri Clan, Nembe Local Government Area by soldiers in the early hours of Thursday June 7, 2018 is uncalled for. The information available to the IYC is to the effect that among others, a woman and her daughter were killed in the process of the invasion and several others injured. The soldiers were alleged to be after suspected

criminals in the communities. The IYC calls on the military authorities to comply with the rules of engagement in their operations in the Niger Delta. It is only in the Niger Delta that soldiers routinely kill innocent people in the name of looking for criminals. This is condemnable and unacceptable."

However the king thinks differently. For him, the raid was necessary considering the level of criminality in the area. For him, it was unfortunate that innocent people were killed.

"I did not see it as an invasion. What happened was not a surprise to me because Oluasiri has been highly neglected by government at all levels over the years. We are saying there is no impact in Oluasiri clan in the past 20 years of democracy. Oluasiri clan is a place Bayelsa shares boundary with Rivers State, where the Soku Gas plant is situated. It has been conceded to Bayelsa State and we are collecting the revenue yet there is nothing to show. The police post there has three policemen without guns; only batons. This is where bunkering takes place with criminal elements making the

place a hideout because it has been isolated. We have cried to government and government has refused to give us attention. So, I am not



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