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Massacre of 8 soldiers, four policemen

JTF kills mastermind, captures suspect

•Sinks three boats

From FEMI FOLARANMI, Yenagoa

Monday, March 05, 2012

In a reprisal, the Joint Military Task Force (JTF) code-named "Operation Pulo Shield," has killed Shedrack Itokofuwei (aka Mammy Water), the alleged mastermind in the massacre of an Army officer and three naval ratings, in a gun battle. The deceased and his gang were fingered in the attack which resulted in the death of Lt. Col Malik, three naval ratings and four policemen.

According to reports, Mammy Water and his gang first encountered the Marine Police check-point and gunned down four policemen before moving to Karankiri junction along Eweleso River and attacked the JTF soldiers.

Checks indicated that the gang ended up at "One Man Camp", a fishing settlement where they engaged a Naval patrol team in a gun fight, which claimed the lives of Mammy Water and a member of his gang while one was captured and three boats were sunk.

The JTF, in a statement endorsed by the Media Coordinator, Lt.-Col Timothy Antigha, who confirmed the killings, disclosed that the security outfit has recovered the remains of the four military personnel. He explained that Mammy Water, who hails from Azagbene in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, was behind the series of attacks along the waterways.

Anitgha, who declared that the attacks against JTF personnel and other criminal actions were being carried out by an unco-ordinated group, dismissed the claims that the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) has claimed responsibility. He implored the public to remain vigilant and report any suspicious movement to appropriate security agencies.

Antigha warned that any attempt to orchestrate fresh violence and insecurity in the region will be an exercise in futility, as "the JTF is prepared more than ever to crush any obstacle on the path to lasting peace and security in the Niger Delta region" The statement reads in



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part: "The Joint Task Force (JTF) Operation Pulo Shield has recovered the remains of the four military personnel attacked on March 1, 2012, along Eweleso River in Bayelsa State. It has also figured out the events surrounding the incident. Consequently, the JTF wishes to disclose that the attack was carried out by a gang of sea pirates led by Shedrack Itokofuwei, alias Mammy Water, who hails from Azagbene in Southern Ijaw LGA of Bayelsa State.

"On that fateful day, Mammy Water and his gang left his base in a convoy of about five speed boats heading to Forupa, a new location in Bayelsa State. However, en route, the criminal convoy attacked JTF personnel who were heading to Ogbia from Brass. Thereafter, the same convoy encountered a Marine Police check-point which they also attacked. However, following the unfortunate incident, military patrol teams within the vicinity were notified. Expectedly, the same convoy emerged at One Man Camp (a fishing settlement). At this point, they were engaged by a Nigerian Navy Patrol boat.

Three of their speed boats were sunk while two others escaped. The leader of the gang, Shedrack Itokofuwei, alias Mammy Water, was among those killed in the fire fight as disclosed by his gang member captured close to the scene of encounter with the Navy Patrol boat.

"It is instructive to note that Mammy Water and his gang were the criminals behind the series of pirate attacks within Nigerian territorial waters in the last three months. This led to the JTF storming his residence in Azagbene in December and his subsequently being declared wanted. The JTF wishes to make it clear that the attack on its personnel and other atrocities committed within the last three months have been staged by a few different and unco-ordinated groups of itinerant criminals operating within the Niger Delta region.

Consequently, the JTF dismisses the shameful attempt by the so-called MEND to seek relevance by creating a false impression that the attacks have been carried out by loyal groups of militants of which it is the co-ordinating authority," the statement noted.

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