

# Military kills pirates, recovers weapons, destroys refineries in Niger Delta

Flora Onwudiwe

**T**he Joint Task Force (JTF) deployed to root out suspected criminal hide-outs in the riverine areas of Delta, Rivers and Cross River states has declared war on pirates, killing about seven suspects, recovering different ammunition and discovering large illegal refineries.

In a release signed by the Deputy Coordinator, Joint Media Campaign Centre, Bayelsa State, Lieutenant Commander, Thomas Ogar Otunji, the task force also gave an account of the challenges they faced in tracking the suspected criminals in the last three days and successes recorded.

Commander Otunji said that the troops of Operation Delta Safe (ODS) deployed to Idama Waterside received a distress call from members of the Idama Community of an attack by

the pirates.

"After engaging the pirates in a hot chase in their speed boat mounted with Horse Power engine, we recovered the speed boat, an AK 47 rifle, three magazines, 20 units of 7.62 millimeters ammunition and two life vests," he said.

In a similar vein, he said the troops while patrolling Kula; Abonema Waterways sailed to Sonykiri Creek and engaged four sea pirates near Olakpoko Kula.

Two of them were killed in exchange of gun fire, while the other two escaped with bullet wounds, but the troops recovered one AK 47 rifle, two AK 47 magazines, 40 units of 7.62 millimeter, two mobile phones and speedboats mounted with 140 HP engine.

He further explained that the troops while on anti-bunkering operations in Rivers State raided an illegal refining camp at Ado-kiye -Ama Community of

Okrika Local Government Area, conducted, search operations and discovered large illegal refineries in the community.

"It was revealed that the camp belongs to one Mr. George Amah based in Okrika and we recovered in the camp 33 pumping machines of various sizes, Thermocool generator, two gas cylinders for welding, three hand held radio, five hand held radio chargers, two 75 horse power speed boats mounted with engine and 19 hose rolls," the statement said.

He said that the troops were in collaboration with the members of the Petroleum Task Force, raided two illegal oil bunkering dumps at Ugwuangwe in Warri South and Udu Local Government areas.

The sites were used as dump and piling camps before trans-loading fuel into petroleum tankers which he said that the troops recov-

ered and destroyed along with the rubbers, hose and jerry cans.

He said that Operation Delta Safe (in Rivers State) intercepted two welding machines, generator, 10 packs of welding electrolyte, two welding masks, two bags of cement, one bundle of marine rope, four shovels, one hose and five live vests, all of which have been set ablaze.

Similarly, two illegal refineries and two wooden barges were discovered around Tangolosusu Area of Bonny Local Government Area and were destroyed by the Troops.

Otunji said that the "Troops in collaboration with the vigilante group in Bakassi ambushed and eliminated five Bakassi Strike Force militants, who had earlier hijacked a boat conveying large quantity of bags of rice from a marketer at Parrot Island in Bakassi Local Government Area.

