

# Gunmen kill soldier, injure another in Jonathan's home attack



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Armed men yesterday killed a soldier and injured another during an attack at the country home of former President Goodluck Jonathan at Otuoke in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. The gunmen, who struck about 3a.m., entered through the river linking Otuoke community and Otuaba community, before attacking the gunboat that was stationed there. Consequently, all roads leading to Otuoke and Otuaba have been blocked by military personnel, with movement of residents restricted. Reacting to the attack, Jonathan assured his people of their safety. When contacted, the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), SP Asinim Butswat, referred our correspondent to 16 Brigade.

The brigade also referred the correspondent to the Join Task Force (JTF). The spokesman for the Operation Delta Safe, Major Jonah Unuakhalu, said in a statement that about 3a.m., gunmen attacked gunboat deployed close to the house of former President Jonathan.

He said: "The vigilant troops repelled the attack while some of the assailants escaped with gunshot wounds. "However, during the attack, one soldier paid the supreme price and another wounded in action. "The wounded has been evacuated to the hospital and responding to treatment. Preliminary investigation is ongoing to identify the persons or groups behind the attack.

"The people are advised to go about their lawful businesses as the security of lives and properties is priority to Operation Delta Safe during the Yuletide and beyond." Also, the Media Adviser to the former president, Ikechukwu Eze, confirmed the attack. Eze said a security post stationed near the Otuoke residence of former President Jonathan in Bayelsa State was attacked by gunmen yesterday morning. He said: "The hoodlums who came in about five engine boats stormed the security post located about 100 metres away from former President Jonathan's residence in his hometown, Otuoke, by 1:30a.m., on Tuesday and attempted to

take away a gunboat belonging to the military stationed at the creek beside the residence.

"They were, however, resisted by gallant soldiers who engaged them in a fire fight.

"The gunmen, who couldn't stand the firepower of the military, were forced to beat a retreat. One soldier, unfortunately, lost his life in the fight while another was injured. The injured soldier, who is currently receiving treatment at a medical facility in Yenagoa, is in a stable state.

"The former President, who was not in Otuoke at the time of the attack, however, returned to his village early this morning (yesterday) to assess the situation. "Jonathan promptly condemned the attack and reassured his people that there was no cause for alarm. The former President has also condoled with the family of the deceased soldier, the military and has urged the concerned security authorities to swing into action and bring the culprits to book." Meanwhile, President Muhammadu Buhari has called his predecessor to sympathise with him following the attack. The President's Senior Special Assistant on Media and Publicity, Malam Garba Shehu, confirmed this in a statement in Abuja. In the telephone conversation, Buhari expressed sadness over the "tragic and unfortunate attack". While commending the soldiers on guard for bravely repelling the attack, the President condoled with family members as well as officers and men of the Nigerian Army over the loss of one of the guards. Buhari said the protection of the life of the former leader and all citizens of the country would continue to be the major preoccupation of his administration.

Buhari also disclosed on his verified Twitter account, @MBuhari, that he spoke with Jonathan on the attack. "I telephoned former President Goodluck Jonathan to sympathise with him on the tragic and unfortunate attack by gunmen on his country home. "May the soul of the gallant soldier who died in the attack rest in peace," the President tweeted. Also reacting to the incident, the Senate President, Ahmad Lawan, said it was despicable. He said the incident defied logic and should be condemned without reservation by all right-thinking Nigerians.

The Senate President called on the relevant security agencies to get to the roots of the attack with a view to bringing those behind it to justice. Lawan commended the security personnel on guard for their prompt response and bravery in foiling the dastardly intentions of the attackers and also commiserated with the family of the soldier who lost his life in the incident. Meanwhile, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has called for investigation into the attack.

The party in a statement by the National Publicity Secretary, Kola Ologbondiyan, also called on the Federal Government to immediately track down and apprehend the gunmen. PDP described the attack as extremely disturbing and demanded for an extensive investigation into the incident.

"Our party insists that the gun attack is a direct threat on the life and safety of the former the president and members of his family and as such the assailants must be tracked down," the statement added. The party also commiserated with the families of the security personnel killed in the attack and urged security agencies to go after the assailants as well as rescue those reportedly abducted during the attack.