

Gunmen Kidnap 3 Chinese, one feared Dead

Barely 48 hours after five Chinese citizens who were abducted on January 5, by Niger Delta militants, but were released last week, arrived their country home, three other Chinese nationals were kidnapped during a raid yesterday on Chinese National Petroleum Company (CNPC), located in Sagbama, Bayelsa State. The gangsters also ransacked the company's accounts office and carted away large sums of money. One of the gunmen was however reportedly killed during a shoot-out with security operatives attached to the company, while scores of persons sustained injuries.

The latest incident, brought to about 32, the number of expatriates being held in the oil-rich region.

It was however not clear whether the attack yesterday was carried out by a militant group or armed robbers, but the State Commissioner of Police

BAYELSA

By Chika Amanze-Nwachuku

(CP), Mr. Hafiz Ringim, who stated that "about two or three workers were taking hostages", stated that investigation would reveal who really the attackers were.

He confirmed that the gunmen burgled the company's account office and carted away some money, but could also not ascertain the exact amount removed by the hoodlums.

The militants have made good their threat to launch more attacks on oil companies and their expatriate workers. Since the beginning of the year, no fewer than 40 oil workers have been abducted by the dreaded militants, with about 32 still being held. Scores of Nigerians, including security oper-

atives attached to some of the companies were killed in some of the attacks.

On December 7, four workers of Eni, Agip's parent company, were abducted by one of the groups, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) during an attack on the company's Brass oil export terminal in Bayelsa state. The group had threatened to kill the hostages, should they be released without its authorization.

MEND had claimed that it did not need any monetary inducement for the release of the hostages, but that an immediate release of their detained leaders, among them, Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo Asari, leader of the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force and former Governor of Bayelsa State, Chief Diepreye Solomon Alamiyeseigha who have been incarcerated by the federal government, was the condition for the release of the hostages.