

# Militants Invade NLNG Boat, Kill 2 Policemen

**T**wo policemen escorting a Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) from Port Harcourt to Bonny Island in Rivers State were yesterday evening killed by suspected militants who attacked the boat mid-sea.

According to the Commis-

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*From Ahamefula Ogbu in Port Harcourt and Fidelia Okwuonu in Lagos*

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sioner of Police, Rivers State, Mr. Felix Ogbaudu who confirmed the death of the policemen, they were attacked around the Okrika channel by some people he said were difficult to

identify.

"The two policemen were killed after their boat was attacked around Okrika channel. The passengers were robbed while the policemen were shot dead. I don't know whether to say they were

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attacked by militants or robbers since the passengers were robbed. If robbery has been mixed with the militancy then we do not know what to call it", he said.

He however did not disclose the names of the policemen involved in the unfortunate incident as facts about the attack which took place around 5.30 PM was still going on.

A statement from NLNG General Manager, External Relations, Ms Siene Allwell-Brown last night read: "A passenger boat carrying 29 persons onboard, including staff of Nigeria LNG Limited and other people from the host community was attacked around Dawes Island, near Port Harcourt on its way to Bonny in Rivers State. "The two armed Marine Police escorts onboard were killed. No other passengers were hurt in the incident which lasted about five minutes. Two armed men boarded the boat demanding for money and handsets shot the policemen and escaped with their guns.

"The police in Port Harcourt is investigating the incident."

The Bonny channel route has lately become dangerous since several attacks have been recorded there and most of them with casualties.

Late last year, a boat belonging to Hyundai, an oil servicing company was attacked when it was suspected that it was carrying large sums of money but because the company, said to be on contract with Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), failed to declare the money as it fouled the policy of SPDC to carry money on board their vessels.

Also, a policeman and an expatriate were killed the same last year when their boat also came under attack.

Meanwhile, military officials, yesterday rescued some foreign nationals- two Croatians and a Montenegrin who were reportedly held by Niger Delta militants seeking for ransom.

According to agency report, the three men who work for an oil servicing company, Hydrodrive were

last seen on February 19 at a bar outside their base in Port Harcourt. They were rescued from Ogbakiri by military operatives in the early hours of yesterday and were declared fit after routine check-up at the local hospital are in very healthy condition and would return to their families with the next available flight.

The Rivers State Information Commissioner, Magnus Abe, confirmed that the hostages were released, at about 3 a.m.

Report stated that two Italians and one Frenchman, who were earlier seized by a different armed group are yet to be released.

Reacting to this, a community leader in Ogbakiri where the men were rescued said troops had invaded the area in search of the militants who kidnapped the expatriates.

"They were shooting and everyone ran into the bush. Some people were wounded and some arrested, the community is innocent. All we ask the government to provide in this town is basic amenities," he added.