

# Militants Attack Naval Warship

*From Ahamefula Ogbu in Port  
Harcourt and Segun James in Yenagoa*

**I**n what looks like an upsurge in militant activities in the Niger Delta region, a Naval warship was yesterday attacked leaving one personnel dead and five other injured. The ship, NNS Obula, was deployed to secure the EA field, an offshore facility belonging to Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC).

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) has claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it wanted to prove to oil companies in the region that military presence could not deter them from carrying out any action if they so wished.

However, Major Omale Ochagwuba, the spokesman of the Joint Task Force, said the attack at Funiwa Offshore Oilfield left six military men injured and one militant killed. He was silent on the death of any Naval officers.

The MEND statement, sent via e-mail and signed by Gbomo Jomo, described the Nigerian Navy as "incompetent", especially in night warfare.

MEND said it was willing to wreak more havoc unless justice was done in the region.

"On Tuesday, October 30, 2007 at about 2100hrs, an elite commando unit of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) attacked the Nigerian Navy Ship Obula stationed to

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protect the EA oil fields in Bayelsa State of Nigeria.

"The attack was to again proof to the oil majors and the Nigerian government that the presence of the Nigerian military in the Niger Delta cannot deter an attack nor provide protection for oil facilities when we decide to attack them. It is only the presence of justice that can.

"The NNS Obula was a sitting duck and this attack again exposed the incompetence of the Navy; especially in night

time warfare. During the last military exercise, the Chief of the Naval Staff [Admiral Ganiyu Adekeye] admitted that 'due to the presence of fog' the exercise had to be called off.

"We found that statement laughable, ridiculous and pathetic considering the fact that our fighters can navigate in pitch darkness at speeds of up to 180 km/hr.

"All commandoes have since returned to camp without any casualties from our side," it said.

MEND had carried out an attack on a floating storage, processing and offloading facility where it took three expatriates hostage a week ago.

The EA field is off the coast of Bayelsa State and had stopped production about two years ago until Shell moved to repair and re-man the facility. It sent two oil servicing companies to the site for the repairs where three of their expatriate staff were kidnapped.

MEND fighters had stormed the facility with over 30 speed boats armed with sophisticated weapons and had taken the hostages, vowing not to release them until their Leader, Mr. Henry Okah, held in an Angolan jail, was released.

One Don Pedro had issued a statement claiming that MEND was responsible for the attack, a claim that was later substantiated from the MEND official address though it denied that the attack was led by Pedro.

The hostages were released after three days without word on what transpired that led to the early release of the hostages which, going by the practice of kidnapping in the region, was hasty.

that "the Management will continue to improve the networth of Afribank and the fortunes of its stakeholders. We promise good earnings through capital appreciation, good dividend and bonuses".

Shareholders associations throughout the country are already mobilizing their members to increase their holdings in Afribank.

Mr. Akintunde Asalu, a President of the Independent Shareholders Association of Nigeria, at the Completion Board Meeting of the Bank last week endorsed the Afribank Offer and "recommend it to investors to subscribe massively to it".

Mr. Sunny Nwosu and Mr. Boniface Okezie, president of the Solidarity and Progressive Shareholders Associations respectively canvassed for public support of the Offer.

Afribank went to the capital market last in October 2004 during which it raised =N=17billion. The =N=6.80 kobo. The Offer price of the bank then =N=6.80Kobo had recorded 442.5% appreciation in just three years at =N=36.89kobo, in August 2007. The Bank also gave a one for five bonus share and paid 30k per share dividend to shareholders for the financial period ended 30th March 2007.