

○ 14 Killed as Militants Resume Attacks

From Ahamefula Ogbu

in Port Harcourt

The celebration of a new year was turned into mourning in Port Harcourt, River State, yesterday, as militants attacked two police stations and other locations, leaving 14 persons dead.

The dead included four

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He said the House was almost rounding off work on the bill when the issues he listed came up forcing the leadership of the House and Senate to resolve to ask for the details of the figures.

"We could not work in isolation. We found out that they did not mention anywhere that they had some funds kept as dedicated account with the Central Bank of Nigeria, so they must

tell us how much is there. We are not necessarily going to work on the money. But all we are saying is that there must be transparency and full disclosure when a budget proposal is being sent to the National Assembly," he said.

Enoh, who said his committee members felt disappointed that the much-needed information from the Executive was not made available, explained that

the issue of the benchmark being jerked up might not arise again if the unspent funds were properly accounted for.

"We may not at the end of the day jerk up the benchmark from \$53 to \$59 per barrel as disclosed by the Deputy Speaker, Hon. Usman Bayero Nafada, on Monday December 31. The amount of money we discovered is still being kept by MDAs and is so much that we

need to get the accurate figures so we can sit down and finalise the Appropriation Bill," he said.

Enoh also said the Accountant-General of the Federation, Alhaji Ibrahim Dankwabo, and the CBN governor, Prof. Chukwuma Soludo, would have to sit down together and come up with the actual figure kept in dedicated account by the Federal Government so that the House could complete the

N'ASSEMBLY *Cont'd from P1*

MILITANTS *Cont'd from P1*

policemen, six militants and a security personnel attached to the Presidential Hotel.

In another separate incident, three other persons were reported killed in Diobu in what looked like cult-related clashes, though the details were still hazy as at press time.

The attack came barely 24 hours after the Rivers State Governor, Hon. Chubuike Amaechi, lifted curfew in the state.

In a chat with newsmen, the state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Felix Ogbaudu, said the attackers came in two cars – a Mercedes Benz V-Boot and Nissan Primera – and an 18-seater Mitsubishi L300 bus.

"The hoodlums carried out attacks in the state between the hours of 12 midnight and 4 am today. They first attacked a patrol team in Artillery area around 12 midnight and were repelled though two of our men were injured.

"They then moved to Trans-Amadi Police Station where they saw policemen on stop-and-search and opened fire on them. They killed one inspector and a mentally deranged civilian brought by his people to be kept till the morning in the station. My men again repelled them and they ran away. They did not enter the police station.

"While still at Trans-Amadi, they ran into a patrol team and opened fire hitting the driver on the head. He is still receiving treatment at the hospital. From there, they moved to the Presidential Hotel where they gained entrance through one of the side doors. They shattered the glass entrance doors and entered the lobby where they fired sporadically and people scamped for safety.

"They then drove to Borokiri where they met their Waterloo. Our APC (Armoured Personnel Carrier) was waiting for them there and rammed into their vehicles and demobilised them. They came out and started shooting. Six of them were killed by the mobile policemen. They then entered the police sta-

tion there and threw dynamite on its roof.

"We lost an inspector, a sergeant and a constable at the Borokiri Station. The hoodlums had to abandon their vehicles and ran. We pursued them to the Ndoki waterside where we recovered a Hilux pickup truck with registration FGN 312J41 belonging to the Federal Government with bloodstains," Ogbaudu explained.

He, however, did not reveal the shooting to death of a security supervisor from Abua in Rivers State and that of the winner of West African idol, Timi Dakolo, who is said to be receiving treatment at an undisclosed hospital in Port Harcourt.

Other vehicles recovered from the hoodlums, according to Ogbaudu, included an L300 bus with registration XB424BNY, Mercedes Benz V Boot car with registration CF 153PHC and a Nissan Primera car with registration DN 421PHC.

He said the police also recovered a General Purpose Machine Gun (GPMG), three AK47 rifles, one G3 rifle, 14 pieces of dynamites, 42 belted bullets, 525 live rounds of 7.62mm special, six

packets of fireworks containing 48 pieces, 232 packets of knock-outs, a crate of canned Star beer and 13 cans of Guinness stout.

Ogbaudu said the militants took advantage of the new year celebration and the lifting of the curfew, to launch the attack.

When THISDAY visited the stations, there were bullet holes on the walls.

At the Borokiri Police Station where the heaviest attack took place, there were bloodstains on the walls and the floor while a hole on the roof to the entrance of the station where the militants had thrown dynamite was visible.

The Leader of the Niger Delta Vigilante Movement (NDVM), Tom Ateke, has claimed responsibility for the attacks.

In a telephone chat with THISDAY yesterday, Ateke said he would fight Amaechi to a standstill.

He alleged that the governor paid the Joint Task Force (JTF) in the Niger Delta to kill him after he had made several attempts to maintain peace in the state.

He said: "I have spent so

much to maintain peace, but the governor seems determined to eliminate me. I will try as much as I can to make the state ungovernable for the governor.

"I'm not a killjoy. I'm ready for peace provided the governor wants peace in the state."

But reacting to Ateke's allegation, the Press Director to the governor, Mr. Ogbonna Nwuke, denied the allegation, saying it was the responsibility of the JTF to maintain peace in the Niger Delta.

He said the state governor did not have to pay the JTF or anybody to kill Ateke, as the priority of the government was to maintain peace in the region.

According to him, "The allegation by Ateke is spurious and suspicious. It is an attempt to pull wool over people's eyes. Where was he when efforts were being made by the government to achieve peace in the Niger Delta?"

"The Rivers State government is committed to the maintenance of peace in the state and the Niger Delta in general. The government will leave no stone unturned to make life secure for citizens of the area."

PRESIDENCY *Cont'd from*

Revenue Service (FIRS), Ms Ifueko Omoigui, to the Senate for re-confirmation after the expiration of her tenure. Why should Ribadu's case be different? Things have to be done properly if our democracy is to be consolidated," the source added. He insisted that the president's least worry is the decision of the Inspector General of Police, Mr. Mike Okiro, to send Ribadu on a nine-month course at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS).

"The issue of the illegality of Ribadu's current tenure is the one that the president is really worried about," he added, but did not volunteer information on the likelihood of the president re-nominating Ribadu for the position. "Since Ribadu is going to NIPSS, I don't think he will be re-nominated for the EFCC job."

The source said that if any of the accused persons raised the

issue of the legality of Ribadu's tenure in court, it may lead to the collapse of the entire proceedings against them.

Yesterday, legal experts and commentators continued to react to the observation raised by Aondoakaa over Ribadu's tenure.

President of the West Africa Bar Association, Mr. Femi Falana, said the AGF was merely expressing his political opinion on the issue and not a legal viewpoint.

Citing Section 2 (3) of the EFCC Act, Falana said Senate confirmation is required only for the first four-year term of the chairman and members of the commission. He argued that Section 3 (1) of the Act which deals with re-appointment does not have any provision for re-confirmation.

Noting that assuming the law even stipulates that there should be a re-confirmation of his re-