

Explosion at Oil Flow Station

Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) yesterday said that it destroyed the Awoba flow station belonging to Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) where it claimed to have killed 11 soldiers.

But in a sharp reaction yesterday, Spokesman of Joint Task Force (JTF) in the State, Lt. Col. Sagir Musa dismissed the MEND claim as "lies and pure bunkum." It insisted that the flow station was not manned and none of its personnel in the area was killed.

Sagir said there was an explosion in the facility and that it had nothing to do with the claims of MEND whose claim he dismissed as arrant nonsense, saying none of their men was in the area

• MEND, JTF differ over casualties

From Ahamefula Ogbu

in Port Harcourt

MEND through its official website in a statement issued by Gbomo Jomo claimed that their demolition experts in the early hours of yesterday stormed the flow station in Degema Local Government area of Rivers State and destroyed it without resistance.

They further claimed that on their way back to base, they allegedly ran into a patrol boat manned by JTF who opened fire on them.

They claimed to have flanked the JTF and returned fire where they killed all the occupants of the

boat and thereafter set it ablaze and freed the girls they had conscripted for their pleasure.

"On Monday, May 26, 2008 at 0100 Hrs, backed by heavily armed fighters, detonation engineers from the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) successfully sabotaged another major trunk pipeline at Awoba Flow Station in Degema Local Government Area of Rivers State belonging to the Shell Petroleum Development Company.

"Minutes after the sabotage, our fighters encountered a military gunboat which opened fire blindly on the advance guard."

"We flanked them in a counter-attack and killed in close combat all the drunken soldiers

numbering eleven, collecting their weapons, ammunitions and bullet-proof vests before using dynamite to sink the gunboat with its dead occupants."

"The two traumatized adolescent girls found in the company of the soldiers were hurt, not from the skirmish, but from gang rape by the soldiers of the Nigerian army. They were dropped off in the neighbouring village by our men who have since returned safely to camp," he said.

"Today's attack is dedicated to the administration of Umaru Yar'Adua and Goodluck Jonathan who have failed after one year in office to ensure peace, security and reconciliation in the Niger Delta region", MEND claimed.

Contacted, spokesman for Shell, Mr. Precious Okolobo confirmed that there was an attack on the facility based on which they did an overfly and discovered the damage has leaked oil into the environment. He said in accordance with their policy of ensuring secure environment, they are mobilizing all the needed technical team to contain the leakage into the environment.

States, AGs Want Inland Revenue Act Amended

A call has gone to the National Assembly to amend the Federal Inland Revenue Act of 2007, to reflect Nigeria's Federal System. Attorneys-General of the 36 states of the federation and chairmen of states Board of Internal Revenue, made the call yesterday in Ilorin, at a meeting to examine rev-

enue for the three tiers of government.

In his opening remarks, Kwara State Commissioner for Justice and Attorney General, Alhaji Saka Isau, SAN, who presided over the meeting, said Sections 2, 25 and 68 of the Act effectively put the administration of Personal Income Tax

under the Federal Government. Isau recalled that the Governors Forum, under the leadership of Governor Bukola Saraki, had last month, directed Attorneys-General of the 36 states to study the Act and arrive at a common position on areas of conflict inherent in the Act.