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JTF Raids Militia Camps Bloodbath Leaves Several Dead Bodies

• Monday, Apr 27, 2009

The Nigerian military on Saturday said it had raided and destroyed two militant camps in the volatile Niger Delta as part of efforts to end violence in the oil-rich region.

Military spokesman, Colonel Rabe Abubakar said government "troops acting on credible intelligence" conducted a cordon and search operation in the Bakana community in Rivers state to recover arms and ammunition from the militants.

He said the military was attacked during the operation, resulting in a "heavy exchange of gunfire between the troops of Joint Task Force (JTF) and the militants."

After the gunfight, the Nigerian troops overpowered the militants who "fled into their camp and were pursued and, subsequently, their camp was destroyed," he said.

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He also said "some dead bodies of the militants were found and several arms and ammunition were also recovered at the camp," without specifying the number of militants killed. He added that there were no casualties among the government troops.

A second militant camp in nearby Delta State was also raided on Saturday.

"The militants fled after the initial encounter and took refuge in their camp which was razed down by the troops," Abubakar said, adding that arms and ammunition were recovered at the camp and several fleeing militants suffered gunshot wounds.

Abubakar did not say which militant group ran the camps and no group has yet reacted to the two raids, including the region's most prominent armed group, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND).

The past three years has seen a surge in violent attacks on Nigeria's oil industry, resulting in a drop in crude production in the world's eighth largest producer to some two million barrels a day, compared with

2.6 million in 2006.

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