

Militants attack Chevron supply vessel, kill one

By Hector Igbikiowobu &
Victor Ahiuma-Young

MILITANTS yesterday attacked a Chevron supply vessel, leaving one person killed and others seriously injured in yet another of several attacks on oil facilities and personnel in the oil rich Niger Delta region where oil workers have embarked on a three day warning strike action.

Mr. Femi Odumabo, the General Manager External Relations of Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) responding to inquiry said investigations were currently ongoing to ascertain the impact of the incident on the company's operations.

It was gathered that the incident occurred in the early hours of yesterday, when yet to be identified individuals attacked a vessel offshore the Niger Delta.

"We can confirm that the incident occurred but at this point we can only say that the staff said to have been killed is an employee of the contractor that supplied the vessel.

"We are still investigating the incident. It happened at about 3:15 am in the Western Niger Delta. All we can add at this point is to reiterate that the incident is still being investigated," the General Manager confirmed.

It was gathered that the

Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) was not party to the incident.

When contacted, a MEND apologist explained that contrary to the information in the public domain, the organisation has not been party to most of the incidents of kidnapping and hostage taking in the region.

He said it was not impossible that some criminal elements within the rank and file of the group may have resorted to unilateral action without clearance from the high command.

The MEND apologist who did not want his name in print also disclosed that the group was trying to reign in freelancers amongst its rank and file, noting also that given the years of neglect the region has been subjected to, it was not strange to find some elements being predisposed to criminality.

While pointing out that the group would endeavour to stem the rising wave of criminality amongst its rank and file, the MEND apologist noted that the development was indicative the problems of the area can not be wished away or solved by force of arms.

Also contacted, Comrade Lumumba Okubgawa, the Deputy General Secretary of Petroleum Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PEN-GASSAN) decried the latest killing of another oil worker.