

# Two soldiers killed as militants attack Shell station

By Samuel Oyadongha

**YENAGOA**—BARELY a week after armed gunmen launched an attack on the Nigerian Agip Oil Company (NAOC) terminal in the Brass Local Government area of Bayelsa State, killing one person and abducting four expatriate oil workers, the peace of the coastal area of the state was again tested Thursday night as another attack was unleashed on Anglo-Dutch oil giant, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC)'s Nun River flow station located at Oporoma in Southern Ijaw Local government of the state. Two soldiers were feared dead.

The gunmen were said to have stormed the oil facility between 11 pm and 12 mid night Thursday in about five speed boats and attempted to take over the flow station, but the attack was repelled by soldiers on guard duty who engaged them in a gun battle. Sources in the creeks told *Saturday Vanguard* that armed gunmen were part of the same gang that attacked late in the night in retaliation for the death of two of their colleagues allegedly gunned down by men of the Joint Task Force guarding the facility in the deep swamp of the council in an attempt to seize control of the oil installation.

Coordinator of the state government owned security outfit, Chief Joshua Benamiasia said the report reaching him from the creek from his field workers revealed only one navel personnel was shot in the leg while four other persons sustained serious injuries but that no death was recorded.

Security at the oil installation, it was further learnt has been reinforced while all the injured wounded workers have been transferred to Yenagoa the state capital for proper medical attention. Sources from the area said the shooting at the facility was intense, a situation that forced local fishermen to flee the area for fear of being hit by stray bullets.

Contacted, the Bayelsa State Commissioner of Police, Alhaji Hafiz Ringim, confirmed the incident but said there were no casualties. Attacks on oil facilities are increasingly common in the Niger delta region in recent time. Though criminal some of the youths claimed to be fighting for a fair share of the wealth derived from their soil.

More than 61 foreign oil workers have been taken hostage this year alone, along with many more Nigerians. The kidnapping usually ended peacefully, although one Nigerian hostage was shot to death in August and another Briton lost his life during a botched rescue attempts.