

War on militants goes tragic: Security men kill 4 in error

SAMUEL OYADONGHA
Yenagoa

FOUR persons reportedly lost their lives Friday along the Oporoma axis of the Nun River in the Southern Ijaw local government area of Bayelsa State when security men mistakenly opened fire on the speedboat in which they were travelling, thinking they were militants.

The boat driver, his deckhand and two others, including a woman, were reportedly killed in the tragic incident while several others with gun shot

• Boat driver blamed for attack

injuries were rushed to Yenagoa for treatment.

The speedboat was said to be heading to Yenagoa when tragedy struck in the creek where security men have been battling to curb the excesses of armed gunmen terrorizing the waterways in the wake of the upsurge in youth militancy in the area. *Sunday Vanguard* gathered that the incident occurred when the driver of the passenger

boat failed to stop at a place where all boats plying the Oporoma route usually slow down for routine check mounted by men of the joint task force, popularly known as Operation Restore Hope.

It was learnt that because of the activities of the rampaging militants in the troubled waterways, the soldiers were agitated by the refusal of the passenger boat to comply with the slow down instruction in the area and opened fire on the occupants for fear that they might be militants.

Witnesses from the area told

Bayelsa Cement Project, in Kogi State, said the head of the Dangote group is a good example

Sunday Vanguard that the poor judgment of the boat driver and the armed security men might not be unconnected with the poor visibility in the creek caused by heavy downpour earlier recorded in the day. The soldiers were said to have rushed to the aid of the occupants of the ill-fated boat on realizing that their victims were not militants.

When contacted on phone, yesterday, the state commissioner of police, Mr. Julian Okpaleke, confirmed the incident but could not ascertain the number of casualties.