

Militants bomb VP-elect's house

- *It's politically-motivated, he says*
- *3 Policemen killed*

By Samuel Oyadongha & Kingsley Omonobi

YENAGOA—DEAFENING explosions, yesterday, rocked Otuoke, Bayelsa State, hometown of the state Governor and Vice President-elect, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, and the Ogbia police station, headquarters of Ogbia Local Government Area, leaving three policemen dead. The country home of Dr Jonathan, who was the prime target of the attack, was left in rubble.

The two attacks at Otuoke and Ogbia main town were launched simultaneously between 1:00 and 2:00 a.m.

Governor Jonathan in a swift

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MR & MRS

THE MAN DID A SMART THING BY QUICKLY LETTING HIS MISTRESS ESCAPE FROM THE CLOSET WHERE SHE WAS HIDING BEFORE HIS WIFE COULD FIND OUT. WHAT WAS SMART IN THAT?



IF HE HAD KEPT HER IN THE CLOSET TILL MORNING, SHE COULD HAVE BECOME A SKELETON IN HIS CUPBOARD!

The bedroom portion of the Vice President-elect's country home in Otuoke, Bayelsa State bombed by militants yesterday.

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reaction said the attack was politically-motivated and vowed: "If the wish of the attackers was to make me renounce my mandate as Vice President-elect, the militants and their sponsors are only labouring in vain."

The parents of the Vice President-elect, who were in the house, were reportedly saved by policemen who moved them to an undisclosed location in the community.

Although no group has claimed responsibility for the attack, witnesses told *Vanguard* at Otuoke that the armed gunmen numbering about 40 stormed the town in several speed boats and engaged the mobile policemen on guard in a shoot-out before overpowering them.

One of the policemen on guard was said to have sighted an armada of boats heading towards the building and quickly alerted his colleagues who engaged the attackers in a shoot-out that lasted for two hours. A police corporal attached to the complex died in the exchange of fire.

On gaining access to the duplex situated close to the Otuoke creek, the invaders were said to have detonated several explosives which also destroyed a lemon coloured Honda Accord car with number plate AH 34 GBB parked in the

compound.

The security post within the premises was not spared as it was razed down by the invaders who were said to have marched on to the community road shooting indiscriminately apparently to warn the natives that they meant business.

Sympathetic natives were seen transferring some of the property in the devastated apartment to the governor's wife's hotel also located in the community when *Vanguard* visited.

It was further learnt that while the raid on the Jonathan's house was taking place, another group of gunmen launched a more vicious attack on the Ogbia police station, killing an Inspector and a Sergeant.

The armed invaders, after freeing the two detained inmates at the police station cell, were said to have made straight for the armoury, ordering all policemen on duty to lie down as they riddled the door with bullets before forcing it open. They then carted away all the arms and ammunition there as well as destroying two cars: a red Toyota Carina with number plates AA 225 EFE and a red Nissan with number plates AM244 LSR within the premises.

The militants were said to have

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ordered one of the freed suspects to carry their loot to their waiting boats at the Ogbia waterfront.

The deceased Inspector, a native of Degema in Rivers State, according to security sources, was only last week posted to the station from Brass.

He was hit by a bullet while taking a nap in a room by the station gate while another Sergeant was also hit and fatally wounded, security sources added.

The state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Julian Okpaleke, who visited the scenes of the attack expressed shock at the action of the attackers, adding that the matter was being investigated.

It was politically-motivated — Jonathan

Reacting, Governor Goodluck Jonathan said yesterday the attack "was politically motivated." But he vowed that "if the wish of the attackers was to make me renounce my mandate as Vice President-elect of the country, the militants and their sponsors were only labouring in vain."

The VP-elect, speaking after declaring open a three-day workshop

for Defence Correspondents in the Bayelsa State capital, noted: "If the destruction of my house and causing injuries to my household is a price we have to pay for the sustenance of democracy, so be it," adding: "I have not been to the village to see the damage but I consider it a minor incident. The attack was politically motivated. I am not moved. I remain resolute to my mandate.

"The police told me an officer was killed in the house and several persons were injured. But I want to say if it is a price we have to pay for the survival of democracy, so be it," he said.

And in a separate statement, Dr. Jonathan said: "There are tremendous sacrifices to be made on the route to providing a better life not only for the people of the Niger Delta, but for the mass of the Nigerian people, and this incident is only one more price to pay in this journey of service."

He described the attack as a fundamental act of wickedness by individuals who have misappropriated, misapplied and now undermine our collective aspirations for justice and good governance, noting that "there have been indications that having failed to disrupt the Presidential elections in Bayelsa with the April 20 attack on the state, there was an effort to cause

further chaos in order to create the impression of vulnerability around" him.

"The cold calculation of these sponsors of violence is to present the vice president-elect as one whose home support is in serious jeopardy as a way of projecting that he may not be in a position to help bring resolution and closure to the roiling crisis in the Niger Delta.

"But even they themselves know this is a lie, and that I enjoy the support and goodwill of Ijaw and Niger Deltans, who remain focused in ensuring that the incoming administration meets the aspirations of our people.

"The recourse to procuring some persons, giving them boats, guns and a few sticks of dynamite to wreak havoc on fellow citizens must stop. The five-decade-old struggle of the people of the Niger Delta for a better deal within the federation must no longer be sundered from within by interests out to feather their own nests. These people seek to divide the Ijaw and the Niger Delta. They must not succeed," he said.

Dr. Jonathan said the Bayelsa State government shall not stand idly by while faceless elements attempt to set the state on fire. "As for those who feel that they are better placed to handle the is-

sues of militancy in the Niger Delta, and are thus advancing it by unholy subterfuge, I wish to state that my life, I have surrendered my fate and destiny to God and the Nigerian people. To do otherwise would amount to challenging fate to a wrestling match," he said.

The governor had while declaring the workshop open, said for democracy to work in Nigeria, it required the trust of government or the leadership and as such there was the need for the media to bring about this trust by informing the people about the activities of government as it is, without sensationalising issues.

"For democracy to work, it requires trust. When that trust is missing, government loses credibility and confidence in the people. The media is very important in this regard, hence you must endeavour to report issues appropriately without impugning," he said.

He urged the media to be caution when reporting issues that pose security threat to the peace and stability of the nation, adding: "No matter the temptations on the media and practitioners, especially during political dispensation, the media should put the interest of the country first because it belongs to all and sundry including the media."