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## Nigeria: Navy Sinks Militants' Boats, Kills 12

**Vanguard (Lagos)****18 September 2008**

Posted to the web 18 September 2008

Jimitota Onoyume

The Navy component of the Joint Task Force (JTF) in Rivers State yesterday killed 12 militants in a fresh gun battle at Soku.

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) also claimed to have blown up a pipeline jointly operated by Shell and Agip at Rumuekpe, while Governor Rotimi Amaechi announced a state of emergency in the education sector as part of the strategy to salvage the fortunes of the state.

Spokesman for the Navy, Lieutenant Way Olabisi, said the naval men were on routine patrol when the militants suddenly opened fire on them at a spot on the waterway. In the ensuing gun battle, the Navy sank the militants boats. All the militants on board were feared dead.

"Our boat was on routine marine patrol in Soku area. We ran into them and they immediately opened fire on us. We later subdued them. We destroyed their boat," Olabisi said.

Another top security source told Vanguard that after several warning shots from the Navy, the militants refused to beat a retreat, thus forcing the Naval men to fire a grenade launcher at the militants boat.

"Twelve of them were killed in the encounter. They first fired shot at our men. We are trained to retaliate with warning shots. This we did but they did not stop. So, we had to apply grenade launcher which sank their boats killing the whole 12 of them," the source said.

The security source also dismissed as untrue claims by the militants that they killed soldiers at Orubiri flow station when they attacked it in the early hours of yesterday. According to the source, the oil facility was slightly torched but no life was lost.

Spokesman for the army and JTF in the state, Lieutenant Col Sagir Musa said: "Nobody was killed in Orubiri or wounded. Yes, Orubiri caught fire, partially burnt due to intense and sporadic gun shots, dynamites, bombs and hand grenades hauled at the facility."

The militants had in an online statement alleged that they killed all the soldiers at the facility and blew up the facility.

MEND claims attack on Orubiri flow station.

It said: "About 2200 Hrs on Tuesday, September 16, 2008, fighters from the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF) in a new alliance attacked and

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destroyed the Orubiri flow station operated by the Shell Petroleum Development Company in Rivers State of Nigeria.

"All the soldiers on guard were killed and provided more weapons for the campaign. Their houseboat was equally destroyed. Every group in the region has dropped their differences and come together to fight a common enemy who has used the instrument of state and the tactics of divide and rule to oppress the region for five decades".

In another statement, MEND claimed to have successfully attacked another oil facility in Rumuekpe. "A very major trunk crude oil pipeline we believe may belong to both Agip and Shell has been blown up today, September 17, 2008 at about 0930 Hrs by our explosives specialists at Rumuekpe, in Rivers State of Nigeria," MEND said.

Meanwhile, oil prices rebounded by more than two dollars, yesterday, recovering some recent heavy losses, as the market firmed on the rescue of US insurer AIG and fresh violence in crude producer Nigeria.

London's Brent North Sea crude for delivery in November rose \$2.51 to \$91.73 per barrel, after tumbling Tuesday to a seven-month low of 89.22.

New York's main contract, Light Sweet crude for October delivery, regained \$2.79 to \$93.94 yesterday.

Oil plunged this week under \$90 per barrel amid turmoil on the financial markets which could spur lower energy demand, traders said.

"Prices recovered on the AIG bailout, while continuing supply disruptions in Nigeria provide support," said Barclays Capital analysts in a note to clients.

However, Governor Rotimi Amaechi of Rivers State, yesterday, declared a state of emergency in the education sector of the state and said government had allocated N70 billion to rescue the sector from total collapse.

Governor Amaechi who spoke in Port Harcourt at the opening of a re-orientation workshop for primary school teachers in the state said it was really sad to note that the sector was grossly under funded with inadequate manpower to effectively drive it to meet contemporary challenges.

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"I wish to, therefore, declare a state of emergency in the education sector in Rivers State. Also, we have in 2008 tripled the total allocation of public resources to education. We have allocated nineteen billion naira (N19,000,000,000.00) to education, which amounts to 11 percent of the total budget.

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