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Vanguard (Lagos)
17 October 2008

Posted to the web 17 October 2008

Jimitota Onoyume

About fifteen militants were feared dead Wednesday night when they encountered men of the Joint Task Force in Bonny River.

According to spokesman of the security body in Rivers State, Lieutenant Col Sagir Musa the militants in six speed boats had made effort to attack a location where the security body had its gun boats but were repelled.

Apparently the aim of the militants he said was to snatch the gun boats. In the ensuing gun battle he said two of the speed boats were sunk with all the occupants and several arms and ammunition later recovered.

"Militants in six speed boats attacked our gun boats location in Bonny River at about 0715pm today (Wednesday). The intention was likely to surprise own troops, capture arms, ammunition and if possible snatch our gun boats.

The attack was repelled. Two militant speed boats were sunk with all the occupants on board. No JTF arms and ammunition or gun boat was lost. JTF personnel was however wounded and is in stable condition.

This message is to preempt unnecessary propaganda and magnification of the situation. The situation is under control and security forces are on top and in control."

He continued that among arms recovered from the militants were one General Purpose Machine Gun (GPMG), one AK47 rifle, one submachine gun, assorted ammunition mostly 7.62mm and some quantity of dynamites.

Another security source told Vanguard that a third boat belonging to the militants was also sunk and that only the driver escaped. Others he said were feared dead. The source also added that out of frustration, as some of the militants were retreating, they threw dynamites on a commercial boat belonging to NLNG. He said the boat was used to ferry passengers on the Bonny water ways we have counted twelve corpses of the militants on the water. And it is very likely more will float before the end of the day"

One of the community source said he was contacted to donate blood to the security operative who sustained gun shot wound during the exchange of fire but he could not because of his frail state. He however said the wounded operative was still alive at press time. And was receiving treatment at the LNG hospital.

The incident came barely three weeks after militants under the aegis of

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Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) declared unilateral ceasefire after several attempts to attack oil facilities in the state.

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No group had claimed responsibility for the attempted attack on the JTF location that Wednesday night.

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