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Militants kill 2 policemen, JTF shoot protesters

EMAIL

Written by Emma Amaize, Emma Arubi, Jimitota Onoyume & Emma Nnadozie
Friday, 21 November 2008

TWO policemen — a Sergeant and a Corporal — were shot dead by militants, Tuesday night, in Port Harcourt, while seven protesters were injured after men of the Joint Task Force (JTF) shot at them in Warri, yesterday.

In Port Harcourt, the policemen were killed on the Opobo Nkoro waterways in the state capital. The State Police Public Relations Officer, Mrs. Rita Inoma Abbey, who confirmed the incident to Vanguard said the deceased cops were accompanying members of the Rivers State Sustainable Development Agency (RSSDA) who were on tour of the state government project in Opobo/Nkoro Local Government.

They were on their way to the local government when the incident occurred close to the shore of the local government area.

She said the policemen were attached to the Police Marine Waterways Division in the state capital. Another source told Vanguard that some other persons sustained gun shot wounds from the incident.

The police men were said to have been recently posted to the state.

This development came on the heels of a similar incident where two policemen were reportedly gunned down around Kaduna Street area of the state capital.

They were said to be on routine police duty around the area when gunmen opened fire on them, killing the two on the spot. A civilian also reportedly lost his life that night in that same spot. It could not be confirmed if the civilian was gunned down by police bullet or that of the militants.

In Warri, a woman and a young boy were shot, yesterday, by men of the Joint Task Force on the Niger Delta at Escravos in Delta State following a peaceful protest by Ugborodo youths against the Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) over job slots and contracts.

The two injured villagers were conveyed yesterday evening to an undisclosed hospital in Warri by the CNL for medical attention after the dust on the incident settled. However, a community source said seven persons were shot and gave their names as Ms Toju Akitikori, Messrs. John Toghnanrose, Tony Mene, Samuel Mejebi and one Arubi all of whom are currently receiving treatment in various private clinics in Warri.

But Commander of the JTF, Brigadier-General Nanven Rimtip, who visited Escravos, yesterday, to assess the situation told Vanguard that some armed youths invaded the Chevron facility in Escravos and opened fire, forcing his men to shoot to defend themselves and the location. He said he was not aware of any casualty on the side of the “attackers” but none of his men was injured.

Vice chairman of the Delta Waterways Security Committee (DWSC), Mr. Ayiri Emami, who is also a youth leader in Ugborodo, however, told Vanguard that it was not true that the protesting villagers carried arms or fired at the JTF operatives.

He said the community carried out a peaceful protest against the company for breaching the Memorandum of Understanding entered by both parties on the issues of job slots and contracts, adding that they came with boats.

He said when he got a call from a senior military officer that the youths were protesting with arms, he requested the officer to send his men to the scene and if anybody was found with arms, he (Ayiri) should be arrested.

Ayiri said the JTF operatives callously opened fire on the peaceful protesters, apparently with a mistaken notion that since armed youths hijacked a ship conveying goods for the Escravos –Gas-to-Liquid project, last weekend, they might have regrouped to attack the company.

But he said the protest should not have come as a surprise to the company because the community had made known its grievances before then, adding that it was because the company knew it was a peaceful protest that it offered to take the victims to the hospital for treatment.

Brigadier-General Rimtip who spoke to Vanguard from Escravos said: “If it was a peaceful protest as they claimed, then, why did they open fire on my men? They cannot fold their hands and watch while people are firing at them. Enough is enough.”

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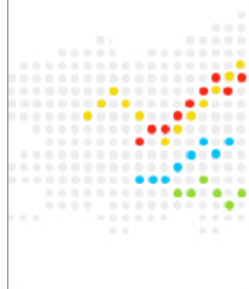
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He said the situation was under control as at yesterday evening, a development which a furious Ayiri also confirmed, pointing out that he had contacted the governor, Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan over the assault on his people by the JTF.

Vice-chairman of Ugborodo Community Trust, Mr. Isaac Botosan, who corroborated Ayiri's claim told Vanguard that the soldiers shot into the community on sighting the peaceful crowd of protesting natives, saying many of the natives were now hiding inside the bush with varying degrees of gun shot injuries.

Mr. Botosan said the community could no longer guarantee a safe working environment for the continuation of the EGTL project following the unprovoked attack on their people.

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1

Written by [Ignatius Olukwu](#), on 21-11-2008 07:47 , IP: 217.117.4.35

It is rather unfortunate that those we entrust our security into their hands are the same people killing us. We still have to learn how to manage crisis. The most unfortunate part of the incident is that the commader of the JTF went over the air deceiving the world, instead of seeking ways to prevent such attacks on defenceless Nigerians. NO LIFE HAS MORE VALUE THAN THE OTHER. This is what I believe so we should always try to protect it.

2

Who is saying the truth?

Written by [ayoson bitran](#), on 21-11-2008 09:51 , IP: 216.147.157.52

It is unfortunate that the Niger Delta albeit Nigeria is covered and governed by lies. This more reason vices thrive and wickedness assume greater height.

Simple incident of this nature would have been put right.... but characteristically, the community protesters and their leaders were making one claim while the JTF and its leadership making another.

The truth can be delayed but cannot be destroyed. The communities where the use of violence to secure interests will always be a fertile ground for all misadventures. The military on the other hand are now bourgeois in their own right. Above the law, without affection, brutal and greed.

With all these evils prevailing, it becomes difficult to know even the truth is being told.

Remember, however, that you will know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

3

Option B, Maybe We Should Try It

Written by [Legate](#), on 21-11-2008 17:11 , IP: 117.96.104.162

I think it is the soldiers who are lieing. Maybe is because those people at the top of the JTF are not from the Niger Delta Region and that is why they don't care about the people of the region and the damages they are inflicting on them. Maybe it is a time soldiers from Niger Delta should be put at the control of the JTF since they can have human sympathy on their fellow Nigeria Delta brothers and the millitants too will also see the JTF as their brothers if it is made up of Niger Delta people.

To me I think why the Niger Delta crisis has gotten to this extent is because the Millitants see the JTF as a common enemy since it is made up of mainly the Northern people they are accusing that they are stealing their oil while the soldiers in return see the millitant as people

who want to stop them from continuing exploiting the Niger Delta oil. Maybe is time the Defence Headquarter should try what am suggesting and perhaps, it might be a solution to the restiveness in the region.

4

Violence is never the solution

Written by [Akmanson Ayman](#), on 24-11-2008 16:37 , IP: 216.147.157.51

Let it be known that violent can never ever solve the problem of Niger Delta.

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