

## Breaking: Soldier, NSCDC operatives feared dead as oil thieves, army clash in Ogoni

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### By Egufe Yafugborhi

PORT HARCOURT – A face-off between men of the Nigerian Army 6 Division and suspected a oil thieves has reportedly left one soldier, two Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps personnel and an oil kingpin theft dead in Ogoni communities of Gio, K-Dere and B-Dere in Rivers state.



Soldiers

The 6 Division's Deputy Director, Army Public Relations, Col. Aminu Iliyasu, commenting on the casualties, said: "I am in contact with our men on the ground and we will soon get a clearer picture of the situation", but sources said the situation remains tense even as at Sunday night.

A source speaking to Vanguard Sunday alleged that trouble erupted when: "suspected oil/cult gang attacked a combined team of army and civil defense personnel guarding an oil pipeline, near the major tarred road leading to Gio, Tai local government area. One soldier, two civil defense personnel were killed and their guns carted away by the rampaging gang at dawn Sunday.

"Not all the villagers are part of the criminal gangs, but they are all paying the price for what they never bargained for. Soldiers then vengefully broke into houses,

destroyed and looted valuables of residents, shooting sporadically as frightened villagers of Gio scampered for safety.

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“The soldiers who ransacked Gio later swooped on neighboring K-Dere-Ogoni and B-Dere-Ogoni in the Gokana LGA in further ruthless operation to avenge death of their colleague. They invaded Christ Army Church in K-Dere in Gokana LGA, and arrested five worshippers.”

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Another source from K-Dere said: “The army invasion outside Gio where their men were killed was deliberate and they succeeded in killing their target in revenge mission. Their target was an oil theft kingpin in Gokana. With the help of his boys, they lured him out and killed him. His corpse should be with the army as I speak.”

In the intensifying violence, followers loyal to the oil theft kingpin were said to have barricaded a section of the East West Road on that axis, denying vehicular movement to and fro for some hours yesterday before the army showed up and dispersed them.

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