

## 6 suspected pirates killed in A-Ibom waterways

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**By Harris Emanuel**

Six suspected pirates, weekend, met their Waterloo in the hands of security agents as they were killed during a gun battle on Akwa Ibom waterways.

Vanguard gathered that the hoodlums had been terrorising passengers and fishermen along the Eastern Obolo Escravos, dispossessing them of cash and other valuables, especially outboard motor engines.

Chairman of Ibeno Local Government Area, William Mkpah, who disclosed this, said the ‘Special Force Squad’ allegedly killed the six heavily armed suspected pirates in a fierce gun battle during a routine security patrol on the waterways.

The council boss stated that a new strategy had been adopted to ensure the safety and security of the shoreline for fishing activities to thrive.

He commended members of the special force for displaying professionalism and justifying the resources spent by the council to tackle the issue of insecurity in the local government area.

He said: “Our farmyard is the water. Once you take away our farmyard from us, it means we cannot function again, it means you have taken away the occupation of Ibeno people and indirectly killing us.

“We have suffered enough in the hands of pirates. They will attack our people, seize their boats and engines and would demand ransom amounting to several Millions of naira before they can get back their boats and engines. Sometimes, they will kidnap the owners alongside their boats and engines.

“This team is called special force. They specialised in marine security. Months ago, in my desire to make Ibeno secure and safer for business, I inaugurated the Special Marine Security Outfit to monitor and safeguard our shoreline, the result we are beginning to witness.

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“I have provided four units of 200 horsepower engines, two units of 75 horsepower engines and two security patrol speed boats with an additional 200 horsepower engine and surveillance boat which serves as a backup.”

Mkpah explained that the heavily armed pirates were sighted by fishermen along Eastern Obolo Escravos, who sent distressed calls to the special force team and they responded urgently and engaged the hoodlums in a duel, killing six, while one escaped with injuries.

He, however, urged the people in the area to go about their normal activities without fear, assuring them of a more secured, peaceful and safer environment.

Police Public Relations Officer, Odiko Macdon, confirmed the report, saying: “Six pirates were taken down.”

Items recovered from the bandits included a speed boat, three 200 horsepower engines, AK-47 rifles including a Setima rifle among other sophisticated weapons and charms.

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