

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Forums](#) | [Directory](#) | [Schoolmates](#) | [Chat](#) | [Jokes](#) | [Soulmates](#) | [Business](#) | [My Portal](#) | [Notable Nigerians](#) | [Articles](#) |
[:: Blogs ::](#) | [Photos](#)

Partisan politics: Count me out of your directive – Adedibu dares Olubadan

Senators disagree over edu



Search Articles:

Search

Main News

[News Articles](#)
[Most Read Articles](#)
[Top News Headlines](#)
[Niger Delta News](#)
[Politics](#)
[Business](#)
[Sports](#)
[Education](#)
[Entertainment](#)
[Government](#)
[Health](#)
[Life Style](#)
[Technology](#)
[Odds & Ends](#)
[E-Mail Updates](#)
[News Feeds](#)

Reading Rooms

[Columnists](#)
[Discussions](#)
[Books](#)
[Features](#)
[People & Profiles](#)
[Documents in the News](#)
[Think-Tanks/NGOs](#)
[Culture](#)
[Interviews](#)
[Students and Educators](#)
[Online Specials](#)

Services

[Subscriptions](#)
[Terms of Service](#)
[About Us](#)
[Archives](#)
[Media Kit](#)

Affiliates

[News Sources](#)

Deadlock! Militants snub FG, Ijaw leaders

Posted To The Web: Tuesday, January 15, 2008 - By HENRY CHUKWURAH, Port Harcourt



Review



Email



Print



Blog It

+A | -A

•Another explosion claims 30 lives, 17 vehicles burnt in P/Harcourt

The festering crisis of confidence between Ijaw leaders and the Niger Delta militants came to the fore weekend, putting the Federal Government in a tight corner over the way forward in the spate of attacks and kidnapping bedeviling the oil-rich region.

Barely 12 hours after Vice-President Goodluck Jonathan met with prominent Ijaw leaders and got assurances from them to get the Movement for the

Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) to rescind its decision to resume hostilities, the militant group reacted by blowing up a cargo ship in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, leaving casualties in its trail.

Sources at the marathon meeting held till the wee hours Friday, between the V-P and the Ijaw elders, at the Aso Rock Villa, said the gathering dispersed with high hopes, as the elders reportedly assured Jonathan that MEND would not make real its threat.

The meeting, which was attended by Ijaw leaders such as Dr. Edwin Clark and Chief Alabo Graham-Douglas, also had in attendance, some members of the Senator David Brigidi-led Niger-Delta Peace and Conflict Resolution Committee.

Sources told Sunday Sun that the V-P had appealed to the Ijaw elders to intervene by entering into dialogue with the militant groups to dissuade them from calling off their ceasefire, as threatened.

Clark reportedly stood up at the meeting later and assured that he and the other elders would intervene by appealing to the militants against going back

▼ advertisement

[IED Search Suits online](#)

Designed for specialist mine / IED search teams; to V50 of 600 m/s
DSEinternational.com/Search_Suits

[Collect up to \\$3,000/mth](#)

Collect \$1,000 - \$3,000 monthly in USVA aid & attendance benefits
www.LatitudeU.com

▼ advertisement



to the trenches.

But not up to 5 hours afterwards, MEND, the mainstream militant group, responded by blowing up a merchant ship in Port Harcourt.

The ship, named Mr. Golden Lucy, went up in flames Friday at the Port Harcourt Ports, at about 7AM.

An explosion reportedly rocked a section of the ship, followed by a huge flame, which billowed unabatedly.

Two persons sustained serious injuries from the incident.

The MEND, hours after the bombing, claimed responsibility for the incident. Sunday Sun investigations revealed that the vessel had arrived the Port Harcourt port the previous day laden with an unspecified industrial oil.

It was not clear whether cargo discharge had commenced before the explosion.

Ports sources stated that the fire could have spread to other nearby vessels that berthed at the quays but for the courageous effort of the captain of one of the vessels who used it to push the burning ship away from the others.

The fire was yet to be completely put off as at Friday noon even though it had been brought under control by a Fire Service team that rushed to the scene. Police source hinted that investigations have begun to identify the cause of the explosion.

However, unofficial sources stated that the fire started from the engine area of the vessel.

In a statement issued Friday afternoon by the MEND spokesman, Jomo Gbomo, the militant group said its Freelance Freedom Fighters (FFF) carried out the operation.

“The MEND confirmed that the FFF men working inside the oil industry detonated a remote explosive that caused the fire on a tanker in Port Harcourt.

The group “appealed to the residents of the Niger Delta” to “avoid milling close to military vehicles and checkpoints as we want to avoid the loss of civilian lives”.

Days earlier, the Conflict Resolution Committee had taken a tour of the creeks in an effort to pacify the militants.

Speaking after a visit to Arogbo-Ijaw parts of Ondo State, secretary to the committee, Hon. Kingsly Kuku, said from the committee’s assessment, “The youths are not militants but young men who have genuine demands and deserved to be listened to.”

He said the Federal Government was prepared to work with the various youth organisations in the Niger Delta with a view to making peace return to the region.

In his reaction to the bombing of the merchant ship, the Director of Press to Governor Rotimi Amaechi, Mr. Ogbonna Nweke, sneered at the claim of responsibility by the MEND.

He said official investigation revealed that the fire resulted from a faulty engine of the ship.

NUD urges caution

Meanwhile, an advocacy group named Nigerians United for Democracy (NUD) has urged the Federal Government and the militants to exercise self-restraint in the conflict in the interest of the greater good of Nigerians.

Signed by its spokesman, Mr. Tony Uranta, NUD's statement read in parts:

"NUD warns against any vainglory-seeking grandstanding by either government or the "militants"; reminding all that the horrors of Rwanda , Bosnia and Sierra Leone all began with even less at stake.

"NUD says Nigerians must never lose sight of the regrettable so-called collateral damage in loss of innocent lives of women, children and the aged, that has trailed the activities of the JTF and of many criminal elements in the region; especially in the light of increasing claims of genocidal intents against the government forces.

It recalls the genocidal undertones of the 1960's Civil War that started independent of the Niger Delta, but fated to end eventually as a consequence of oil geo-politics; praying that Nigeria never again experiences avoidable mass destruction of souls and property, just because some leaders wish to curry international favour or save-face, having mishandled a simplistic peace process.

"NUD draws attention to the fact that there had been a semblance of peace in the region, whilst the agitators opened negotiations with the Yar'Adua administration, but the peace process broke down following government's repeated breach of agreed positions, such as the amnesty government allegedly granted the armed insurrectionists in accordance with the latter's primary minimum demand. In future, both government and MEND must learn to abide by every clause agreed to in the peace process.

" NUD advises that now that it is becoming clearer that there may have been an upsurge in arms, materiel and mercenary-assisted training in the creeks, Nigeria must not allow herself to start an attritive action that would do nobody good."

Another explosion

Meanwhile, less than 24 hours after the oil vessel explosion, another fire incident in the Rivers State capital yesterday claimed thirty lives and no fewer than 17 vehicles.

This time around, a fuel tanker that reportedly lost its axle, fell and later burst in flames in the early hours of Saturday at the Eleme Junction axis along the Port Harcourt-Aba Expressway.

Within seconds, the fire spread to the nearby terminal of the Enugu State Transport Company (ENTRACO) and razed down about 10 commercial buses.

Three men said to be drivers of some of the buses who were sleeping in their vehicles were also burnt to death.

Also burnt beyond redemption were five cars and several shops within the vicinity.

Sources at the scene of the incident alleged that the fuel tanker with Anambra registration number AA351 AJL was being pursued by some law enforcement agents and while on top speed, its axle came off.

The driver who was said to be on danger list in an undisclosed hospital, tried

in vain to control the vehicle. It fell on one of its sides, spreading its fuel content.

In another accident, several women traders sustained injuries at midnight when their palm oil-bearing 911 lorry ran into a stationary truck that broke down at the centre of the road, near the Government Craft Centre along Port Harcourt-Aba Expressway.

It was gathered that there was no sign to warn on-coming vehicles of the faulty truck with Lagos registration number XJ 978 LSR.

Latest News :

Treasonable Sex! : You slept with my wife
Pastoral work ruined my company – Rev Aleyakpo
SUPER GRANDMA
We're poised to tackle exam fraud – Minister
I'm ready to face EFCC – Igbinedion
38 years after civil war: Ojukwu angry, receives pension
20 feared killed in Okene renewed crisis
Obasanjo wasted \$10 billion on power –Yar'Adua
Go to hell, Rivers govt tells warlord, Ateke Tom
Another NURTW boss shot dead
Reps probe banks, NNPC over N17bn pension fund
Yar'Adua taking Nigeria to the promised land – Otunba Balofin
Flawed polls: Labour leader calls for Yar'Adua's resignation
Reps query N18.67bn ECOWAS, e-Passports contracts
Allow peace in N'Delta, Bankole tells militants

Related Articles:

No Related Content Found



[How to Suggest a Site](#) | [Company Info](#) | [Link To Us](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Advertise with Us](#) | [FAQ](#)
Copyright 1998 - OnlineNigeria.com. All rights reserved. [Privacy Policy](#) | [Refer A Friend](#) |

Site Developed by [Devace](#) | Powered By [Nigeria Web Host](#).