

Nigeria militants attacked oil facility

Contributed by Egypt News
Wednesday, 17 September 2008

Militants have attacked another oil facility in Nigeria's Delta region, after declaring war at the weekend

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (Mend) said it had destroyed Shell's Orubiri flow-station.

"Militants in eight speed boats attacked Orubiri with bombs, dynamite and hand grenades," said military spokesman Lt Col Sagir Musa.

This is the fourth attack this week. Nigeria's oil production has been cut by 20% due to the unrest.

Col Musa told Reuters news agency that no soldiers had been killed in the attack.

The BBC's Andrew Walker in Nigeria says the recent fighting has been the heaviest in two years between militants and security forces.

Mend says it has killed at least 29 people, mostly soldiers, although this has been denied by the military.

Two other Shell facilities have been attacked, while a raid on one owned by Chevron was fought off on Tuesday.

Late on Tuesday, two South African hostages were released, Col Musa said.

Earlier, a British oil worker was seized in the Delta's main city, Port Harcourt.

In an e-mail send to journalists, Mend threatened to widen their attacks outside Rivers State, where the clashes have occurred in the past few days.

Mend said it was "declaring war" in response to attacks by the military.

Some 200 foreign oil workers have been taken hostage in recent years.

Almost all have been freed, normally in return for a ransom, although this is always officially denied.

The militants claim to be fighting for the rights of inhabitants of the oil-producing Niger Delta, who mostly live in poverty.

But many say they are criminal gangs out to extort money from oil companies.

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