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## Shell and Agip pipelines sabotaged in Nigeria

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Emirates Business 24|7 reported that Nigeria's most prominent militant group sabotaged oil pipelines operated by Shell and Agip, widening up a 6 week long offensive against Africa's biggest energy industry.

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta said that gunmen attacked the pipelines in 2 separate attacks near Nembe creek in Bayelsa state in the Niger Delta. Attacks against the OPEC member's oil sector have become a near daily occurrence since Mr Umaru Yar'Adua president of Nigeria announced an amnesty offer 2 weeks ago.

Mend has sabotaged pipelines, bombed oil facilities and kidnapped foreign workers following the military's biggest offensive in the region for years in late May. Militants were still holding 6 foreign crew members hostage, 2 days after their chemical tanker was hijacked off the coast of Escravos in the Niger Delta.

Mend said that "The plague of sabotage descended heavily on major Shell and Agip crude trunk lines in Bayelsa state. The pipelines connect to Agip's Brass and Royal Dutch Shell's bonny crude oil export terminals.

A Shell spokeswoman said that the company was investigating the report. Shell and Agip and US oil firm Chevron have cut output by around 273,000 barrels per day in the last 6 weeks because of the latest militant violence.

Mr Yar'Adua said last week that he would offer a 60 day amnesty to militants and criminals in the Niger Delta beginning August 6th. But Mend, a loose network of varied factions has publicly dismissed the amnesty offer. One of the group's key demands is the immediate release of its suspected leader Mr Henry Okah, who is on trial for gunrunning and treason and could face the death penalty. Mr Yar'Adua ordered his interior minister last week to extend his clemency offer to Mr Okah but he has so far failed publicly to do so.

(Sourced from Emirates Business 24|7)

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