

OIL THEFT : BREAKTHROUGH, AS TROOPS ENGAGE CRIMINALS IN GUN DUEL, CONFISCATE OVER 212,000 LITRES OF STOLEN PRODUCTS

The fight against oil theft and associated crimes in the Niger Delta Region (NDR), has resulted in significant breakthroughs. The series of operations conducted, resulted in the deactivation of 31 illegal refining sites, arrest of 29 suspected oil thieves, demobilization of 26 boats used for the illicit activity as well as the recovery of over 212,000 litres of stolen products across the joint area of operations. These breakthroughs were recorded in joint operations conducted with other security agencies from 3 - 9 March 2025.

In Rivers State, in a decisive operation conducted at Ogbonga Forest in Bonny Island Local Government Area (LGA), troops deactivated Ten Illegal refining sites, 15 cooking pots, and recovered one heavy duty generator as well as two massive reservoirs stocked with over 70,000 litres of stolen crude. These were in addition to three tanks filled with over 10,000 litres of stolen products and a 200 meters long hose used for the criminal venture recovered. The items were tactically concealed under a thick forest, hence not susceptible to aerial surveillance. Additionally, along Oloma general area also in Bonny Island LGA, three suspected oil thieves with a wooden boat laden with over 10,000 litres of stolen products were intercepted. While, around Karakarma, four illegal refining sites, four boats were destroyed with over 9,600 litres of stolen crude confiscated.

Relatedly, around Rumuokwurusi - Elemenwo in Obio Akpor LGA, four Gp Tanks filled with over 9,500 litres of stolen crude disguised as Bakery were handled. Similar operations were also carried out at Bille and Kumbufari Creeks in Degema LGA, where several illegal refining sites, three wooden boats and holding facilities were taken out with over 9,000 litres of stolen products confiscated. At Ebocha in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni LGA (ONELGA), one active illegal refining site, a large metal oven drum, hoses and a reservoir with over 6,000 litres of stolen products were handled in accordance with subsisting operational mandate. Several other seizures were effected at Omoku also in ONELGA, Joinkrama 4 in Ahoada West LGA, Karakarma Community in Bille, Degema LGA, as well as along Cool Beach general area.

Similarly, in Delta State, a truck was intercepted conveying over 35,000 litres suspected to be stolen products. At Opumami in Warri South LGA, 5 wooden boats used for illicit activities were demobilized with 4,000 litres of stolen products recovered. Other seizures were made at Obodo Omadino Community in Warri South South LGA where three active illegal refining sites, with several holding facilities and over 3,000 litres of stolen products handled. Additional seizures were also effected at Ogbe - Ijoh market, Ughoton, and Alele Communities all in Warri South LGA.

In Bayelsa State, troops came under fire from suspected oil thieves, but own superior fire forced the criminals to flee in disarray. In a follow up operations conducted, over 12,000 and 9,000 stolen crude and illegally refined Automotive Gasoline Oil (AGO) were recovered respectively. Other items recovered included, seven wheelbarrows and one motorcycle. Also, around Biseni in Yenagoa LGA, four illegal refining sites were deactivated, with 18 metal oven tanks, drums, metal pipes, hoses and dugout pits with over 5,800 and 200 litres of stolen crude and AGO confiscated respectively. Along Biseni - Samabiri road, also in Yenagoa LGA, one Toyota Sequoia Jeep loaded with over 1,750 litres of illegally refined AGO stored in sacks were recovered. Similarly, over 4,000 litres of illegally refined AGO in

two separate residential buildings were recovered. The occupants fled and abandoned the vehicle and buildings on sighting troops.

Meanwhile, in Akwa Ibom, over 5, 600 litres of illegally refined premium motor spirit in 20 jerricans of 280 litres were intercepted at Oron LGA. The products were suspected to have been primed for smuggling to a neighbouring country through the waterways.

While commending the troops for the operational milestone achieved, the General Officer Commanding, 6 Division, Nigerian Army, Major General Emmanuel Eric Emekah charged them to sustain the pressure on the criminals. He also called on economic saboteurs to turn a new leaf and embrace legitimate means of livelihood, or be ready to face the full wrath of the law.

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