South Sudan extradites 14 Gambella attackers to Ethiopia

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By Tesfa-Alem Tekle

June 24, 2012 (ADDIS ABABA) – Ethiopia's government spokesman said on Friday that 14 men suspected of being behind two separate deadly attacks in Ethiopia’s western Gambella region have been detained by authorities.

In mid-April unknown gunmen ambushed a passenger bus in Gambella where they killed 19 and injured eight others. There was a second attack same month when gunmen in the region attacked the Saudi Star business group, an agriculture company, owned by Ethiopian billionaire Mohammed al-Amoudi and killed 5 people including one Pakistani. During the attack four Pakistanis and another four Ethiopians suffered injuries.

Government spokesman, Shimels Kemal said the suspects were arrested trying to cross into neighbouring South Sudan.

Kemal said the Ethiopian gunmen while crossing borders to South Sudan exchanged fire with with South Sudanese forces, killing two soldiers.

“Several members of the rebel group were also killed and those 14 who survived were arrested by South Sudan Army” Kemal said.

It is not yet known if the suspects belong to any rebel group. The government official said a criminal investigation is underway and it is early to say which group they belong to.

The Gambella region, which borders South Sudan, has a history conflict between communities mainly over natural resources. Currently a number of South Sudanese particularly from Jonglei State have cross to the region to escape a government disarmament campaign following tribal clashes last year.

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