

Stray bullet kills Benue driver during kidnap attempt

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Benue PPRO, Edet

| By Dayo Oyewo

A commercial driver, Ochoche Ekwu, has lost his life after being struck by a stray bullet during an attempted kidnapping along the Makurdi–Kura Road in the state.

PUNCH Metro learnt this from security expert, Zagazola Makama, in a statement he posted on X on Thursday.

According to him, the incident happened on Wednesday while the driver was conveying some engineers in a bus along the route to Makurdi.

He stated that the bus reportedly ran into suspected bandits who attempted to abduct them.

He wrote: “Troops have repelled an attempted kidnapping along the Makurdi–Kura road in Benue State, but a driver was killed during a crossfire between soldiers and suspected bandits on Wednesday evening.

“Zagazola gathered that the incident occurred at about 6:30 p.m. when a group of engineers travelling from Kura to Makurdi encountered armed men who had blocked the road, intending to abduct passengers in a bus ahead of them.”

Makama added that the driver, however, got hit during the exchange of gunfire.

“According to a local source, soldiers on routine patrol were behind the engineers’ vehicle and immediately engaged the attackers in a gun duel, forcing the assailants to flee into the bush. During the

exchange of fire, Ochoche Otokolo Ekwu, the driver of the engineers' vehicle, was hit by a stray bullet and died on the spot.”

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He added, while quoting a security source, that the Divisional Police Officer of the 'D' Division later mobilised a patrol team and tactical units to the scene.

He added that the victim's body was subsequently evacuated and deposited at a mortuary in Makurdi.

“Meanwhile, security operatives were said to be combing the surrounding bushes in search of the fleeing suspects to forestall further attacks along the route,” he added.

When contacted on Thursday, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Udeme Edet, confirmed the incident.

She said, “The incident happened. A combined team of security operatives has launched a search operation to apprehend the perpetrators.”

PUNCH Metro reported in October that a yet-to-be-identified tricycle rider had been killed by a stray bullet outside a brothel in the Badore area of Ajah, Lagos State.

The development comes amid rising cases of kidnappings by bandits in some parts of the country.