

# Gang kidnaps, murders Rivers girl in forest

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File photo: Police officer

| By Dennis Naku

The Rivers State Police Command has arrested a 26-year-old man identified as Goodnews Iberi for kidnapping and killing a 25-year-old girl along the Emuoha axis of the East-West Road in the state.

The Police said the suspect, with his gang, now at large, had lured the girl, identified as Rita Eleonu, before taking her into an evil forest.

The Spokesperson for the Command, Grace Iringe-Koko, disclosed this in a statement issued in Port Harcourt on Monday.

According to Iringe-Koko, the miscreants subsequently kidnapped the girl and immediately contacted her family, who paid a N210, 000 ransom to secure her freedom.

Unknown to them, the suspects later killed the girl for suspected ritual purposes and buried her in a shallow grave in an evil forest before fleeing.

She said both the arrested suspect and their victim hail from Obio/Akpor local government area of Rivers State.

She said, following a distress call by a relative of the girl, operatives attached to the Anti-Cultism Unit in Emohua swung into action, leading to the arrest of the prime suspect (Iberi) in his hideout on the early hours of January 8, 2026.

The police image maker said the suspect confessed to the crime during interrogation and led the policemen to the forest where the girl's remains was exhumed.

The statement reads, “The Rivers State Police Command in a bold and coordinated operation, has arrested one Goodnews Iberi, a 26-year-old native of Rumuakunde Community in Emohua LGA, in connection with the kidnapping and murder of Rita Special Eleonu, a 25-year-old female from Rumuekini Community in Obio Akpor LGA, following a distress report on December 29, 2025, by the victim’s brother (name withheld).

“Recalled that on December 13, 2025, the suspect and four of his accomplices, now at large, lured Rita to Rumuakunde axis in Emohua LGA, where she was kidnapped and later taken to an evil forest along the East/West Road in Emohua. The suspects, after collecting the sum of Two Hundred and Ten Thousand Naira (₦210,000.00) in ransom from the victim’s family, murdered her.

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“Acting on this distressing, but credible piece of information, Operatives of the Command attached to the Anti-Cultism Unit (ACU) Emohua annexe, utilising intelligence-led Policing, arrested Iberi on January 8, 2026, at about 0630hrs in his hideout.

“During preliminary interrogation, the suspect voluntarily confessed to the crime, highlighting his role and further incriminating four other accomplices. The suspect led Police Operatives to where the victim’s decomposing remains have been recovered from the forest and deposited at the University of Port-Harcourt Teaching Hospital (UPTH), Morgue for autopsy.

“The suspect is currently in Police custody and an in-depth investigation has been launched, while efforts are ongoing to apprehend other members of his syndicate.”

The State Commissioner of Police, Olugbenga Adepaju, commended the diligence and swift action of the operatives in apprehending the suspect.

Adepaju encouraged the public to maintain trust in Police operations and to support the Command with intelligence that can enhance prompt response and strengthen our collective fight against crime in all its manifestations.

He urged citizens to remain calm, vigilant and report any suspicious activities to the authorities, and provide credible information that could aid the arrest of the fleeing members of the syndicate to come forward and assist the Police for prompt action.

Adepoju assured that the identities of anyone or any group who volunteers useful information would be protected with utmost confidentiality.

Recall that on Sunday, the Anambra Police Command arrested a 26-year-old suspect, Chibuike Anikpe, over the alleged murder of his girlfriend, Ogochukwu Mmadubugwu.

The Police Public Relations Officer in the state, Tochukwu Ikenga, said the arrest was carried out by operatives attached to the State Criminal Investigation Department, Awka, on January 7.

**| Dennis Naku**