

Female abductee dies as six other kidnapped Ekiti persons return

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File photo: Ekiti map

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It was a mixture of relief and grief at Erinmope Ekiti in Moba Local Government Area on Thursday as six family members kidnapped earlier returned home safely, while a seventh, a female abductee, reportedly collapsed and died during captivity.

The victims were said to have endured several weeks of forced wandering with their abductors through the expansive forests spanning Ekiti, Kwara State and Kogi State.

Five females, including a nursing mother, an expectant mother, and three others, were initially abducted from Erinmope Ekiti on January 24 and taken into the forest. The kidnappers demanded a ransom of N100 million.

During negotiations, two men from the family went to deliver N10 million to secure the release of the five women. However, the abductors rejected the amount and took the two men captive, increasing the number of hostages to seven.

Sources said the hostages were eventually released earlier this week following payment of N25 million by the family.

Narrating their ordeal on Thursday, Muhammad Soliu, one of the six freed victims, said the female who died collapsed from exhaustion during the gruelling trek.

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“We trekked several kilometres barefoot, without food or water, from a forest in Kwara to the Kogi axis. We had no hope of surviving,” Soliu said.

He added, “As we were being moved from one location to another, the deceased woman collapsed. We pleaded to carry her, but the kidnappers threatened to kill us if we stopped. They ordered us to continue moving without looking back. It was the worst experience anyone could imagine. We are appealing to the authorities to assist us in recovering her body for proper burial.”

Soliu said he and his brother were tied together when they delivered the first N10 million to the kidnappers and were forced to travel further into the forest. They were not allowed to interact with the five women initially abducted.

He explained that the six survivors were released at separate locations in Kogi and Kwara States on Tuesday, from where they made their way back to Erinmope.

“I was freed at Idofin in Kwara, while the others were released in Kogi State. My brother and I spent 11 days with our abductors, while the five women spent about a month in captivity,” Soliu said.

The expectant mother was reportedly taken to an undisclosed hospital for medical attention following her release.