

Edo: Police arrest kidnap suspect, recover decomposing bodies of two victims

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From Tony Osauzo, Benin

Operatives of the Edo State Police Command have recovered two corpses from the forest along the Benin–Lagos Expressway; the victims were kidnapped last month from Ekiadolor.

The recovery followed the arrest of one of the kidnappers—a member of a seven-man syndicate operating along the Benin–Lagos and Benin–Akure expressways—by the Violent Crime Response Unit (VCRU), who engaged them in a gun battle in the forest.

The State Commander of the VCRU, CSP Osagie Godspower, led journalists and health officials into the forest where the corpses were recovered.

One of the victims, whose mother was among those killed, said the kidnappers struck their home in the Iyowa community, Ekiadolor, abducting her, her mother, and the maid staying with them.

She narrated that three more families were later abducted and brought to join them in the forest, making a total of four families.





She explained that they were meant to trek round the forest at night while they rested during the day.

“We were here at this spot for two days. When they asked my mother her age, she responded 66; they asked another woman and she said 45, and one small boy, who was 15 years. We initially thought they were going to let those ones go because of their age, but later in the evening they took them down this way and after some argument they shot the other woman on the shoulder, and the bullet also met my mom.”

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“The other woman went quiet immediately, but my mom was still talking. I could hear her praying, and later she started breathing heavily and later stopped. After about five minutes, they took us to another location where they also shot the boy through the shoulder and he died,” she said.

The victim disclosed that her family later paid eleven million naira and brought other items, while other families also paid ransom before they were all released.

The Police Public Relations Officer of the Edo State Police Command, ASP Eno Ikoedem, explained: “We had a major first breakthrough in this case on the 19th of May, when operatives of the VCRU sighted four of the syndicate in the forest and engaged them in a gun battle, with many of them escaping with gunshot injuries. We had another breakthrough days after following their trail when we arrested one 24-year-old Haruna while he was trying to take treatment for his gunshot wound. He has since confessed to the crime, and he led us here to recover the two bodies, as well as the body of the 15-year-old boy which we have evacuated earlier.”

“We are still on the trail of the rest, and we are confident that in no time the Violent Crime Response Unit will round up the remaining members of this kidnapping syndicate,” she stated.

Meanwhile, the suspect, 24-year-old Haruna Musa, confessed to being a member of the seven-man syndicate after a brief period spent controlling cattle in Ogun State last year.

“Me na cattle I dey control. The Salah when past—no be this one, the other one—one of my brothers call me make I come control cow for Ogun State, but no be Fulani get am, na ordinary person get am when dem wan take do Salah.”

“As dem sell the cow finish for Salah, that my brother come say make I come, say another work dey. Na so we take come here when I see say na this kind work. I fear say if I tell dem say I no dey do that time, them go kill me, so I no get choice than to follow them,” Musa narrated.