

Lagos-Ogun police kill 4 kidnappers, rescue 5 victims, as 'Operation Kósàyè' begins



Grateful victims hugs policeman.

By Evelyn Usman & James Ogunnaike

The Nigeria Police on Saturday, formally launched Operation Kòsàyè, a joint security offensive by the Ogun and Lagos State Police Commands aimed at dismantling kidnapping syndicates and other violent criminal networks operating along the border communities of both states.

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The operation recorded its first major breakthrough with the rescue of five kidnap victims on Friday, barely 24 hours after they were abducted along the Ijebu-Ode-Benin Expressway. Four suspected kidnappers were neutralised during the rescue operation, while another member of the gang escaped with gunshot wounds.



Rescued victims.





Some suspected criminals.

A separate four suspected kidnappers and 84 other criminal suspects were also arrested in separate operations along the Lagos/ Ogun corridor. Police also recovered AK-47 rifles, pump-action guns, locally made pistols, ammunition, mobile phones and other communication gadgets from the suspects.

‘Operation Kosaye’

Speaking while parading the suspects at the Police Training College, Iperu-Remo, Ogun State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Bode Ojajuni, said Operation Kósàyè, a Yoruba expression meaning “there is no hiding place,” was initiated by the Inspector-General of Police, IGP Olatunji Disu, to flush out kidnappers, armed robbers and other violent criminals from forests and border communities linking Ogun and Lagos states.

He said: “Operation Kósàyè is designed to reclaim our forests, dismantle criminal camps and restore security across communities stretching from Kara and the Long Bridge through Sagamu, Ogere and Ijebu-Ode to adjoining border communities in Ikorodu and Epe.

“Identified flashpoints have been cleared. Illegal shanties used by criminals have been dismantled, while several suspects have been arrested.

“We are here to reassure residents and dispel the fear and rumours deliberately being spread by kidnappers. As I speak to you, there is no Nigerian currently being held captive by kidnappers in either Lagos or Ogun State.

“You will recall the recent kidnapping incident along the Ijebu-Ode corridor. Acting on the directive of the Inspector-General of Police, operatives of Operation Kósàyè moved into the forest and successfully rescued all five victims. They are here with us today.

“During that operation, four kidnappers were neutralised and another four arrested. In addition, 84 other criminal suspects were apprehended in separate operations during the forests clearance across Lagos and Ogun states.

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“As I speak, there is no known victim currently being held in captivity within the operational areas covered by this exercise.”

He urged members of the public to continue supporting the police with credible intelligence, particularly information relating to kidnappers and persons with gunshot wounds.

Also speaking, Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Fatai Tijani, said the operation had begun yielding significant results with the destruction of criminal camps hidden inside forests along the Lagos-Ogun border.

According to him, criminal gangs had exploited the thick forests and difficult terrain along the boundary to establish camps from where they launched attacks on commuters and residents.

“This is not a one-off operation. It is a continuous exercise that will be sustained until criminal elements are completely denied access to these forests,” he said, adding that cutting-edge technology, including drones, as well as intelligence gathering, had been deployed.

Tijani attributed the success of the operation to the leadership of the Inspector-General of Police and the support of Governors Babajide Sanwo-Olu and Dapo Abiodun for providing the necessary logistics.

“The results speak for themselves. You have seen the rescued victims, the suspects arrested and the weapons recovered. This is a coordinated effort aimed at tackling insecurity,” he said, adding that the strategy could serve as a model for combating crime in other parts of the country.

‘They demanded N70m’

Recounting her ordeal, one of the rescued victims, Pharmacist Usofor Amarachi, said she was returning from her village in Oraifite, Anambra State, after attending her father’s burial when gunmen attacked their vehicle near Ogbere.

She said her widowed mother was shot in the hand and, in the ensuing confusion, her injured mother and elder sister managed to escape.

However, she and one of her aunts were abducted and taken into the forest.

According to her: **“They demanded N70 million but later reduced it to N20 million. There were five of them and they were Fulanis. I was confused and hopeless. We slept in the open without food or water.**

“On the day we were rescued, a head was cut off and thrown at us. We then went to the

“On the day we were rescued, we heard sporadic gunshots. We thought the kidnappers had returned. We all lay on the ground.

“We later discovered the gunshots were from police officers. I am grateful to God for the prompt intervention, and I will forever remain grateful to the Nigeria Police .”

Also speaking, Miss Temi Faith said the kidnappers also ambushed their ambushed their vehicle at about 4pm, on the same day (Friday) , marched them deep into the forest where they met other victims.

She added that ” They collected our phones and the cash with us. I sustained injuries during the attack

“I had already given up hope. I prayed what I believed would be my last prayer. Suddenly, we heard gunshots. The kidnappers fled and a policeman came to us, saying, ‘It’s the Nigeria Police. Come out.’ They saved our lives, treated my injuries and ensured we were safe,” she said.

Another victim, Mr. Jimoh Gbadamosi, a farmer who was coming from Edo State in a separate vehicle, said the kidnappers intercepted several vehicles around Ogbere, abducting five persons from three vehicles after shooting sporadically.

While commending the police for what he described as a miraculous rescue operation, he urged the Federal Government to provide more sophisticated weapons for security agencies and establish permanent security posts along the Ijebu-Ode-Benin Expressway.

A mild drama unfolded when the widow, Mrs Blessing Nsofor who sustained a gunshot injury and managed to flee , arrived from the hospital and knelt before police officers at the Police Training College, Iperu, in appreciation.

In an emotion-laden voice, she apologised for all the negative remarks she had made about the police in the past.

‘I’ll never speak against Police again’

“As from today, I will never speak ill of the police again. But for them, I don’t know what would have happened to me, my two daughters and my sister who travelled with us for my husband’s burial.

“I managed to escape from the bus. My body was soaked with blood. I ran in search for help but some people ran from me. I begged them to help me, until a motorcyclist volunteered to carry me to the hospital. I was rejected at three hospitals until I was taken to the general Hospital where I was treated.

“I am eternally grateful to the Police. They are excellent ,” she said, showing journalists her bandaged left arm from the gun shot injury.

Meanwhile, unknown to the rescued victims, their relatives back home were still making frantic efforts to raise the ransom demanded by the kidnappers before news of their rescue reached them.

The rescued victims also called for the return of police checkpoints along the Ijebu-Ode-Benin Expressway, noting that they would serve as a deterrent to

kidnappers. They further appealed to the Federal Government to clear the thick bushes along the highway to improve visibility and enhance security.