

EKITI: Death toll hits 5

VICTOR OGUNJE, Ado-Ekiti

MRS. Helen Oluwafemi, Secretary to Programme Manager of the Agriculture Development Programme in Ekiti State died yesterday at the Federal Medical Centre (FMC) Lokoja, Kogi State capital.

This brings to at least five death toll in the auto crash on Kabba-Lokoja road which claimed the lives of Attah of Ayede Ekiti, Oba Adeleye Orisagbemi and the Acting Provost of the State College of Education, Dr. Gabriel Olowoyo.

Also a driver with the ADP Mr. Olawole Thomas is now on danger list at the intensive care unit of the FMC.

Olawale, before his death was driving the Toyota Hilux pick-up van conveying Mrs. Oluwafemi from Ikole Ekiti before they met kidnapper last Friday.

A first class traditional ruler in the state, Oba Adeleye Orisagbemi and Dr Gabriel Olowoyo and their drivers were kidnapped by suspected kidnappers, who stormed the state on Friday but later perished in auto crash in Kabba-Lokoja road.

Meanwhile, Deputy Governor of Ekiti State, Dr. Sikiru Lawal yesterday commiserated with the families of the Attah of Ayede-Ekiti and

the Acting Provost, who died in the accident.

Besides, the Ekiti State Police Command and the State Security Service (SSS) said they have commenced investigations to arrest those behind the dastardly act.

The victims all met their untimely death, following the raid by a group of kidnappers who took them from Ekiti State before their death in an auto crash

The death of Mrs. Oluwafemi was confirmed by the ADP Public Relations Officer, Mr. Yomi Ogunrinde. Said he: "The kidnappers according to the driver trailed them from ADP office at the exit of the town to a restaurant in Ikole town.

He said further, "On arrival at the restaurant, four men in suit came in and ordered the secretary out and from there; they drove them towards Omuo Ekiti end of the town.

"He said when they got to Kabba road junction, the van stopped due to tracker installed on it and sensing danger, the driver said the kidnappers stopped all the cars already snatched with their occupants which included that of the Attah of Ayede and the Provost of the College and packed all of them inside their Toyota Hiace bus with Ondo State Government number

plate.

According to him, when they were inside the bus with the kidnappers, during a discussion; they realised that the bus itself was snatched from Ondo State, from where they were operating.

Ogunrinde, said the pick-up van with National Programme for Food Security inscribed on both side doors had been traced to Lokoja where it was abandoned.

Another victim of the kidnapping who was lucky to have escaped death, said on telephone from his FMC, Lokoja hospital bed that, when they were approaching the Federal Road Safety Commission, (FRSC) road block they thought that help would come from the commission, but this he said was not so, as the kidnappers forced them to accelerate.

"We were happy on approaching the road block as we see it as a safe place to call for help, but when one of them overheard our discussion he ordered the driver to speed up that there may be danger if he stop at the road block.

"This made the driver to over take other vehicles already on the line stopped by the men of the FRSC and in the process; he lost control and that was the last I know," he said. The Public Relations Officer of the State College of Education,

Mr. Dada Adeyeye said the Council of the College will hold an emergency meeting today to take decisions on the tragedy.

"We are making arrangements to bring the corpses of the Provost and his driver back home while the Council would meet tomorrow, (Monday) to decide on what to do, but the Personal Assistant to the Provost is still receiving treatment at the intensive care unit at the FMC, Lokoja", he said.

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