

Kidnapping: Police lose 27 men in Abia

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Abia State Command of the Nigerian Police said it lost no fewer than 27 of its gallant men in the war against kidnapping in the state in less than seven months.

Commissioner of Police, Mr. Jonathan Johnson, who disclosed this in Umuahia, while parading some suspected criminals, also decried the non charlant attitude of the locals in the crime prone areas of the state to give useful information to the police which could help in tracking down criminals. He identified Obingwa, Ugwunagbor, and Obehie areas of the state as crime endemic zones, and accused residents of non cooperation with the police.

"Between January and July alone, we have lost about 27 police men who had gone in search of kidnappers and never

returned. They died in the line of duty just within Obingwa alone. We have never recorded any police casualty in any other part of the state. All our casualties are from this part, and sometimes they lay ambush for our men.

"Obingwa, Obehie and Ugwunagbor are the areas notorious for kidnapping. These days, they no longer go out for outsiders but their kinsmen, collecting as low as N10,000 and N5,000 as ransom. It is very ridiculous. "The road network in these areas make it difficult for police to track down the criminals. Secondly, the people are reluctant to give information to the police," he regretted.

The police boss who said he spent three days in the forest during the rescue operation of the kidnapped journalists at Obingwa, admitted that police had made some arrests in connection with the incident,

but declined further details, adding that the identities of the suspects would only be made public when the kingpins were nabbed. Mr. Johnson, further said three traditional rulers had been identified as the main sponsors of kidnapping in Obingwa.

According to him, the royal fathers would soon be declared wanted, explaining that they were different from the royal fathers recently suspended by the state government. The CP, therefore, appealed to the members of the public to exercise patience with the police as they intensify efforts in the war against kidnapping and other violent crimes in the state.

"We want to appeal to the public to sympathise with us. We are handicapped in many areas even though that may not be an excuse. A little patience with us will give us the necessary energy we need, in tracking the criminals, but when we are distracted through negative criticism, it will not help us," he said.

The CP reiterated the commitment of his men in flushing out criminals from the state so that both residents and visitors could sleep with both eyes closed.

... 2 paraded for robbery

RESIDENTS of Umuahia, the Abia state capital were shocked Monday, when the state police command paraded two police men suspected to be members of a notorious robbery gang terrorising residents.

kerosene from them.

The suspects were Soporuchi Asiegbu, Chijioke Nwogu, and a female, Nneoma Asiegbu, while other members of the gang were said to have fled.