

Abia: Police kill 3 kidnappers

STEVE OKO, *Umuahia*

ABIA state police command, Tuesday, recorded a major breakthrough in the war against kidnapping, following the killing of three suspected kidnappers at Umuibe village in Obingwa LGA.

Briefing newsmen on the incident, at the Police Headquarters Umuahia, where the bodies of the suspects were displayed, Commissioner of Police, Mr. Jonathan Johnson, represented by the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Mr. Kings Omire, said the suspects were members of a kidnap syndicate, terrorizing residents of the area.

He said that police got information about the movement of the gang, which was operating with a bus at the said village in the wee hours of Tuesday, and deployed their anti terrorist squad which laid ambush at different locations around the area.

Continuing, he said the kidnappers' bus was sighted at a distance as they wanted to intercept an on-coming car obviously to abduct the occupants before the crack police team bravely closed in on them.

On sighting the police, the suspects numbering about seven quickly abandoned their would-be victims and wanted to flee, but were stoutly resisted by the police who had tactfully cordoned off the area.

Sensing imminent danger, the criminals opened fire at the police but were eventually overpowered by the gallant policemen after a gun duel which lasted for about two hours.

"Our men were encouraged by the bullet proof vest they were putting on, and they also allowed the criminals to exhaust their bullets," said the DCP.

According to police source, two bodies of the victims were later discovered in the nearby bush, about 50 yards away from the scene of the incident, while one of them, suspected to be the driver, was gunned down as he attempted to jump out from the L300 Mitsubishi

bus marked Ebonyi XA 761 BKL in which they were operating with.

Thorough combing of the bush led to the discovery of a military rifle and two magazines with seven live ammunition and hundreds of expended ammunition, the police source added.

According to the police boss, Police, however, did not record any casualties in the operation, while about three other members of the gang were said to have fled with bullet wounds.

While appreciating the public

for their cooperation by providing information to the police, the CP also appealed to members of the public to report anybody with bullet wounds around their vicinity to the nearest police station.

"The success registered was principally as a result of the information we got on phone from a public-spirited man who alerted us that kidnappers were coming from the bush. Members of the police force are not spirits. We need useful information to work with," he appealed.

NIPRDD to unveil anti-malaria drug soon

AKOR SYLVESTER, *Abuja*

EFFORTS by Federal Government to tackle malaria in the country received boost Tuesday as the National Institute for Pharmaceutical Research and Development (NIPRD) disclosed that it was in the final stage of unveiling a new anti-malaria drug with more potency in the treatment of the disease.

The Director-General of the institute, Prof. Karmiyus Gamaniel, who dropped the hint at the opening ceremony of a one week capacity training workshop for the institute's researchers, said the drug which was manufactured from a local herb was awaiting the final phase of clinical trials before it would be formally made public.

Gamaniel who said the initiative was borne out of the rapid increase of malaria scourge in the country and most parts of the sub-Saharan Africa, said NIPRD's latest effort had an improved efficacy level to deal with all known symptoms malaria.

He said the drug under way had been confirmed by both foreign and home medical institutes to be the best for the treatment of the dreaded disease which in the past, had eliminated the lives of many Nigerian children.

Maintaining that it was unethical to disclose the name

of the drug before it's finally unveiled; the NIPRD boss said "very soon, the problem of malaria would be a thing of the past with the drug."

"We have developed a malaria treatment drug which is currently undergoing phase three. After trial having successfully scaled through phase one and two trials. This initiative is sponsored by World Health Organisation (WHO).

"We have submitted reports and the protocol is now ready for the phase Three trial after the three multi-centre trials the drug will be formally launched into the market just like the NICOSAN drug developed for management of Sickle cell patients," he said.

The Director General of the institute who pointed out that Nigeria was not making much progress in the area of research, urged Federal Government to commit reasonable resources in the existing research institutes in the country in order to improve the economy.

He added that unless government improves its funding on research and equally encourage researchers both at home and abroad, the country would continue to depend on foreign counterparts on the delivery of goods and services, which ordinarily could be delivered in the country if there is real commitment.

Police: Police harrowing NIPRDD members from party secretariat