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1,946
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Hunt continues for 'kidnap kingpin' as police fault army

By Ronald Mutum, Ismail Mudashir
(Abuja) & Magaji Isa Hunkuyi
(Jalingo)

● How suspect lives large among the people

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has faulted the Nigerian Army on the incident that led to the killing of three policemen and a

civilian as well as the escape of a suspected kidnapper Hamisu Wadume in Taraba State.

This is even as a member of the Inspector-General of Police Intelligence Response Team

(IRT) told *Daily Trust* than manhunt for Wadume has since resumed.

The army had said that its troops, while responding to a distressed call to rescue a

kidnapped victim, exchanged fire with the policemen who were mistaken for suspected kidnappers because they refused to stop when they were halted.

The army went further to say that the refusal to stop led to a pursuit and the suspects were killed after opening fire on the

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Hunt continues for 'kidnap kingpin' as police fault army

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soldiers.

But the spokesman of the Police, DCP Frank Mba in a statement yesterday accused the army of distorting the facts to justify "the unprovoked and unwarranted murder of three police officers and one civilian."

Mba said, "in the best tradition of Esprit de Corps, Inter-Agency Harmony and National Interest, the Nigeria Police Force would naturally, have kept quiet, but it has become imperative to set the record straight by addressing the obvious distortion of facts inherent in the Press Release by the Nigerian Army."

He said, "The most important question arising from the Nigerian Army Press Release is: Where is Alhaji Hamisu Bala Wadume? Alhaji Hamisu Bala Wadume is a millionaire kidnapper arrested by the police but paradoxically treated as a "kidnap victim" by the soldiers and subsequently 'rescued' by them. Where is he? Where is the rescued kidnapper?"

He said the army statement was silent on the source of the alleged distress report or identity of the complainant, adding that "It is not true that the policemen failed to identify themselves."

"The video on the incident, now viral, wherein the voice of one of the soldiers was heard loudly proclaiming that the policemen were from the Force Headquarters, Abuja speaks volume," Mba said.

He also said the presence of the IRT personnel was well known to the Taraba Police Command as the operatives officially and properly documented not only at the state command headquarters but also at the Wukari Area Command and the Ibi Divisional Headquarters.

He said the Nigerian Army should now tell Nigerians "Where is the notorious kidnapper, Alhaji Hamisu Bala Wadume 'rescued' by the soldiers? How and why was Alhaji Hamisu Bala Wadume released by the soldiers? How could a kidnapper suspect properly restrain with handcuffs by the Police escape from the hands of his military rescuers?"

"If Alhaji Hamisu Bala Wadume is a 'victim of kidnap' as claimed, and properly rescued by soldiers, why was he not taken to the Army Base for documentation purposes and debriefing in line with the Standard Operating Procedure in the Nigerian Army?"

"Why were the Police Operatives shot at close range even after they had identified themselves as Police Officers on legitimate duty as evident in the video now



■ Late Inspector Mark Edaile

'Slain policemen among the best'

Earlier in a tribute to the slain policemen, DCP Frank Mba said they consisted of some of the most disciplined, proficient and hardworking police investigators in the service of the nation.

He gave their names as Inspector Mark Edaile, from Edo State; Sergeants Usman Danzumi and Dahiru Musa, both from Taraba State.

He said until their death in the hands of soldiers of 93 Battalion Takum, the officers have participated in several high profile and high-risk arrests, rescue missions and investigative operations.

He said some of these operations include: the arrest of Nigeria's most notorious kidnap kingpin, Evans, the arrest of 20 Boko Haram terrorists responsible for the 2014 kidnapping of the Chibok School Girls in Borno State.

Mba said they were also responsible for the arrest of Umar Abdulmalik, the Boko Haram Commander of North Central Nigeria and several of his group members.

The arrest of the kidnappers of two American and two Canadian citizens in Kaduna State, And most recently, the rescue of Magajin Garin Daura in Kano State and arrest of the thirteen (13) terrorists responsible for the kidnapping of the Magajin Garin Daura in his home town Daura, Katsina State on 1st May 2019, among many other outstanding feats.

He said the Inspector-General of Police (IGP) Mohammed Adamu commiserates with the families, friends and professional colleagues of the fallen heroes, reassuring them that their death will not be in vain. The IGP equally calls for calm among Nigerians as efforts are in top gear to unravel the mystery surrounding this bizarre crime.

Video shows aftermath of shot cops

A video now circulating on the Internet showed the aftermath of the shooting which led to the death of the cops. A white Hiace bus can be



■ Late Sgt. Usman Danzumi

be a road.

In the four minutes 40 seconds clip, a crowd of irate youth can be seen at the scene with some soldiers in their midst. Some of them could be heard describing the policemen as criminals.

Some threatened to finish off the wounded policemen still alive in the video, describing them as criminals, whilst insulting them.

Later a soldier is seen in a wide-angle shot, apparently supervising the evacuation of what appeared to be the lifeless bodies of the cops into a military pickup van.

At the end of the video, someone among the onlookers said the policemen had shown their ID card, noting that they were from the IGP team in Abuja.

How Wadume won the people's hearts

According to the police, Wadume has been on the police wanted list for his complicity in several high-profile kidnap cases including the recent abduction of an oil-mogul in Taraba State wherein a ransom of about N100 million was paid.

Sources in Ibi told Daily Trust that the suspected kidnapper now on the run is not known to own any business and did not inherit money. However he turned a millionaire overnight.

One of the sources said Wadume became popular among the people because of his generosity.

"If you have any financial problem just meet Wadimi he will solve it," a resident of Ibi told Daily Trust, adding that Wadume gave out more than 40 motorcycles and cars free to both the young and the old in the town in less than two years.

Another source said Hamisu now owns several commercial vehicles in Ibi, Jalingo, Wukari and other towns

According to another source, who simply gave his name as Mallam Sale, Wadume is always in money and always gives out but nobody knows his sources of money.



■ Late Sgt. Dahiru Musa

Ibi have been questioning the source of his money until when the police attempted to arrest him and revelations started coming out that he is allegedly into kidnapping activities.

Malam Sale said Wadume hardly spends ten days in Ibi and whenever he comes back he comes with millions, freely giving to his friends and the needy.

The police spokesman in the state, DSP David Misal, could not be reached for comment over the issue as he did not pick several calls by our reporter.

Daily Trust reports that Wadume escaped after the youths in the town chased the policemen that arrested him and accused them of being kidnappers up to a military checkpoint.

The soldiers at the checkpoint, it was further gathered, allegedly opened fire on the approaching vehicle conveying the detectives, forcing the driver to stop.

Security chiefs probe police killing by soldiers

The country's security chiefs yesterday met with President Muhammadu Buhari at the Presidential Villa, Abuja.

The members of the security council include; the Chief of Defence Staff, General Gabriel Olonisakin, Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Tukur Buratai, Chief of Naval Staff Rear Admiral Ibok Ekwe Ibas and Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshall Abubakar Sadique.

Others are Director-General of the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), Ahmed Abubakar, Inspector General of Police, Mohammed Adamu and the Director General of Department for State Service (DSS), Yusuf Magaji Bichi.

The council has resolved to constitute a committee to probe the killing of policemen in Ibi-Jalingo Road, Taraba state. The Air Force Chief said a committee will be setup under the defence headquarters to critically look into the circumstances that led to the killing of the cops.

Daily Trust reports that the army earlier announced the setting up of a joint panel to