

# Police kill kidnapper, rescue 13 victims in Edo

From Usman A. Benin

Operatives of the Edo State police command in collaboration with the military and vigilante group have rescued 13 kidnap victims while one of the suspects was killed on the Benin-Auchi road.

Five of the victims were rescued at Okwo Ogbemudia farm, Uhumwonde local government of the state, on the Benin-Auchi road while six others were rescued at Ekpoma, in Esan West local government of the state respectively.

It was learnt that the kidnapper was killed in a gun battle with the police during the rescue operation at the Okwo Ogbemudia farm.

The state command's spokesman, Kongtons Bello, who spoke to journalists, said on January 9, security agents received information that gunmen were shooting at vehicles.

"One of the vehicles veered off the road and rammed into a palm tree with the driver who sustained bullet wound on his head left unconscious while a female passenger identified as Awoma Jerry also sustained injury while they kidnapped other occupants of the vehicle," he said.

He said while combing the bush in search of the victims, the kidnappers were sighted fleeing with some of them into the bush and they engaged the security agents in a gun battle, adding that in the process, one of

the hoodlums was shot and killed while the victims were rescued.

Speaking further, SP Kontongs said six other victims were rescued in collaboration with the vigilante at Ekpoma in the state.

He said the passengers were conveying a corpse from Taraba State to Irukpem for burial when they were kidnapped by armed men.

Kongtons said the police, on receiving the information, mobilised the vigilante and hunters to the scene and embarked on bush combing during which they rescued six of the victims unhurt.

He added that efforts were still on to rescue the remaining four victims and arrest the kidnappers.