

Police uncover gang targeting, killing car-hire drivers in Rivers

The Rivers State Police Command has arrested some members of a criminal gang suspected to be murdering car-hire drivers and stealing their vehicles.

SP Grace Iringe-Koko, the command's spokesperson, in a statement in Port Harcourt on Monday linked the group to multiple cases of drivers that got missing.

She revealed that the arrest of one gang member, Anthony Chima, exposed the sinister activities of the gang in the state.

She stated: "The discovery of this criminal enterprise targeting Uber drivers in the state followed the disappearance of one Oghenevwarhe Barry Akpobome, an Uber driver.



■ One of the suspects

2 "Upon investigating the disappearance, police operatives arrested one Anthony Chima, a 35-year-old graduate of Political Science from the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt.

"Upon interrogation, Chima confessed to being recruited into a gang that specialises in luring taxi drivers into ambushes and stealing their vehicles," she stated.

Iringe-Koko said Chima's testimony revealed the gang's further gruesome actions of killing the drivers and harvesting their body parts for ritual purposes.

"The suspect said he was introduced to the gang by his friend Amfoh Abu - the group's arms dealer, and another individual simply identified as 'Reason'.

"Investigations further revealed that 'General Effizy', the gang's leader, is a prominent figure in the Greenland cult and a seasoned kidnapper in the state," she added.

The police spokesperson said that Chima confessed that he randomly obtains the Uber drivers' phone numbers and pretends to be a passenger in need of a ride.

She said that on Jan. 10, Chima contacted Akpobome and directed

the driver to pick him up at Reason's residence.

"Disguised as a passenger, Chima lured the unsuspecting Uber driver to a remote area in Aminigboko, where he met Reason and General Effizy along with four-armed gang members.

"The driver was forcefully removed from the vehicle and taken to Effizy's shrine, where he was tied up, gagged and gruesomely murdered.

"Chima later led the police to the shrine and Effizy's residence, where personnel recovered the victim's skull and a locally fabricated Baretta pistol," she said.

Iringe-Koko said that a manhunt had been launched to capture the fleeing gang members, stating that Chima would face legal actions.

She said that the Rivers State Commissioner of Police, Tunji Disu, has advised Uber drivers to be cautious while picking up or transporting passengers, particularly to remote or potentially dangerous areas.

"The Akpobome incident serves as a stark reminder of the dangers that lurk in the shadows, and the importance of vigilance and cooperation with the law enforcement agencies," the police image maker said. (NAN)