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Gunmen kidnap Appeal Court judge, kill police orderly in Edo

By Odita Sunday, Lagos, Kelvin Ebiri. Port Harcourt and Michael Egbejule, Benin City

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• Buhari, security agencies must ensure Justice Nwosu-Iheme's release A Judge of the Court of Appeal, Benin Division, Justice Chioma Nwosu-Iheme, was on Wednesday kidnapped by dare-devil gunmen in Benin City, capital of Edo State. The police orderly, Inspector A. I. Momoh, was also killed by the gunmen before whisking

her away.

Justice Nwosu-Iheme is the chairman of the three-man panel sitting on the appeals arising from the 2019 State and National Assembly elections in Edo State. She is Nigeria's first female doctoral degree holder to serve as a judge, after studying the Law of Intellectual Property up to Ph.D level.It was gathered that the gunmen, numbering four, trailed their victim from Ramat Park axis of the Benin-Agbor Road in an unmarked Toyota Camry car and intercepted her vehicle around the highway on the same road.

An eyewitness, who craved anonymity, said immediately after intercepting the judge, the hoodlums shot the tyre of her Toyota Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV), forcing it to a halt. The source added that the gunmen also opened fire on the police orderly, killing him on the spot before hurriedly whisking away the female judge to an unknown destination in their car.

The incident occurred in the absence of the state's police boss, who is attending a summit for Commissioners of Police being hosted by the Inspector General of Police in Lagos. The kidnappers are yet to make any ransom demand. When contacted, the state police command spokesman, DSP Chidi Nwabuzor, confirmed the incident. He said: 'The incident occurred today at about 11:30a.m. along Benin-Agbor Expressway by Christ Chosen Church of God International. The judge was attacked while the police orderly attached to her was murdered and the driver of the vehicle severely injured and rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment.

"Immediately, the police operatives of Ikpoba Hill Divisional Police Headquarters, the tactical team of Edo State Command and other relevant sections swung into action, but unfortunately, they got away with her. Investigation is ongoing and by the grace of God, Justice Nwosu-Iheme will be rescued unhurt."



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World Politics Sport Opinion Business Technology kidnap attempt. Both the CMD of Irua Specialist Teaching Hospital and the wife of the Director of Nigeria Railway Corporation have been released.

Also, a judge of the Federal High Court, Akure Division, Justice Abdul Dogo, was kidnapped last week Tuesday by gunmen while travelling from Abuja to Akure on Tuesday at Ibilo town, Edo State. Shortly after, the abductors contacted the family, demanding a sum of N50 million ransom. He was released after three days on Friday night with his driver.

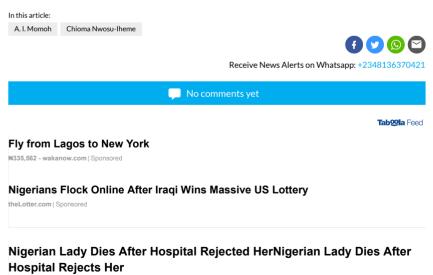
Meanwhile, President Muhammadu Buhari and the security agencies have been urged to spare no effort in ensuring the immediate rescue of the kidnapped judge. Former Rivers State Commissioner of Information, Emma Okah, said the abduction and killing of her police orderly in Benin yesterday was despicable and heartrending.

Okah, who expressed dismay over incessant kidnapping in the country, lamented that numerous Nigerians are kidnapped on a daily basis all over the country and concerted effort must be made to end the menace.

"This creeping but most dangerous development is totally unacceptable and the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) must stand up and take a very firm position against defending kidnap suspects. State governors in Nigeria must take a cue from their American counterparts and show enough courage to sign death warrants pursuant to affirmed conviction and sentence of death by the appropriate court.

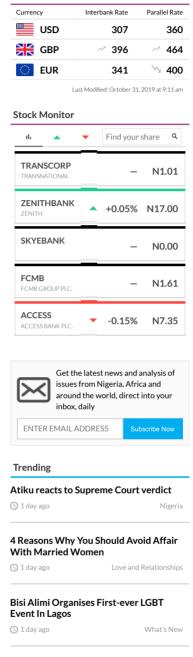
"I call on President Muhammadu Buhari and the security agencies to spare no effort in ensuring the immediate rescue of this innocent woman whose only offence is that she is resident in Nigeria," he said.

In 2015, Justice Nwosu-Iheme was presented with the official 'Key to the City of Miami', United States, by Mayor Tomas Regalado. The Commissioner of Police in Edo State, DanMallam Mohammed, confirmed the incident. He said: "The judge was kidnapped on Wednesday but security measures are in place to rescue her. The command would bring the kidnappers to book by the power of the Almighty God."



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