

Gunmen kill commercial bus driver, abduct eight passengers in Rivers

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06 September 2022 | 3:43 am



[FILES] Gunmen

Gunmen on Saturday night killed a commercial bus driver and abducted eight of his passengers along the Emuoha/Kalabari road axis of the East-West Road in Rivers State.

The Guardian learnt that the driver identified as Salvation Harry loaded from Mile One Park in the Diobu axis of Port Harcourt and was travelling to Buguma when he was ambushed at one of the bad spots on the road.

It was gathered that the gunmen shot the driver dead and immediately took all passengers into a forest as they fired shots into the air to ward off any threat and escaped unchallenged.

It was further gathered that one of the abducted passengers was freed, after parting with the sum of N150, 000, while the others are still in captivity.

One of the drivers plying the route, who preferred anonymity, lamented that despite the outcry to security agencies over frequent attacks on the route, nothing has changed.

He said: “We had staged a protest on Kalabari-Emuoha-Buguma road because of series of kidnap incidents and the shooting of our drivers and passengers.

“Even the Commissioner of Police sent a representative. Since then, there has been an increase in kidnapping incidents.

“But yesterday the worst of it happened. They (miscreants) killed one of our drivers, Salvation Harry, who is from Buguma. As I am talking to you now he is in the mortuary. And the occupants of the vehicle are in the bush with the kidnappers.

“We don’t really know what to do because we have lost confidence in the government. They cannot protect life and property again.

“Maybe because we are not violent and cannot resort to carrying arms to protect ourselves on that road. We are tired,” he lamented.

An eyewitness said the presence of security personnel on the road has not solved the security challenges on that axis. He accused policemen of paying attention to people carrying illegally refined petroleum products, rather than facing kidnappers.

He said: “The police are just concerned about collecting money from drivers and exploiting passengers. If they could kill the driver, then we don’t know the fate of the passengers.

“So, we are appealing to the relevant authorities to come to our aid. We are law-abiding citizens. This is where we feed our families and fend for ourselves.”

Contacted, spokesperson for the state’s police command, Grace Iringe-Koko, who confirmed the incident, said the police have launched an investigation into the incident to ensure that travellers are rescued as well as apprehend the abductors.