

Gunmen Kidnap Akpabio's Driver, Kill Orderly

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UNKNOWN gunmen have kidnapped the official driver of the governor of Akwa Ibom State, Godswill Akpabio, and killed a police orderly who accompanied him on their way to Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital.

According to a Government House source, the driver, Joseph Francis, a police inspector, was going to Port Harcourt for routine servicing of the governor's official vehicle at one of the leading automobile companies there.

Daily Independent also learnt that the orderly, a police corporal, recently attached to the Government House security team, died during a shoot out.

The third occupant of the vehicle was said to have escaped into the bush and resurfaced in a nearby police station.

The kidnappers, the source further disclosed, are demanding for N100 million ransom for the release of the driver, whose whereabouts, as at press time, were not known.

The kidnappers, *Daily Independent* further learnt, demanded to speak directly with Akpabio, who

is currently in the United States of America on official assignment.

In a telephone conversation, the state Police Commissioner, Walter Rugbere, told journalists that although he was not in the state, the command had been informed of the development.

He however, added that the incident did not happen within Akwa Ibom State.

However, Abia State Police Commissioner, Johnathan Johnson, who confirmed the incident while speaking with our correspondent on phone, said, "We are aware that they kidnapped him. I was in Abuja when I heard about

it, and we have not gotten in touch with the family".

He added: "From all indications they must have trailed him from somewhere and we believe that he must have been taken to another state. I don't have any information as to the whereabouts of the kidnapped driver."

In another development, a socio-political pressure group, Greater Ibom Mandate Group (GIMG), has lauded the achievements of Akpabio, saying with success recorded in infrastructure, education, health and general welfare of the ordinary people, the governor deserves a second term.