

# Banditry: Abia Police Nab Alleged Killers Of Couple

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The police command in Abia have arrested at least twenty criminal suspects, including five boys, who allegedly robbed and shot a man and his wife to death in Umuahia on Saturday.

The suspects, who were identified as Precious Okoro, Justice Ogbonna, Enyinna Asiegbu, Promise Obilor (a.k.a "Esere") and Kingsley Emezuo (a.k.a Pakins), were said to have attacked the couple, when they were returning home with their children after the day's business.

The Commissioner of Police, Mr Ene Okon, who paraded the suspects before newsmen at the command's headquarters on Bende Road, Umuahia, said that they were arrested by a team of operatives from Umuahia Central Police Station and members of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) in Operation Puff Ader.

Okon said that the couple, Mr Darlington Uzoma and his wife, Chinyere, who were egg sellers, were killed on Secretariat Road, Umuahia at about 7 pm.

He said that two of the suspects, Okoro and Ogbonna, were arrested in a tricycle after the operation, adding that "interrogation of the duo resulted in the arrest of the remaining members of the gang."

"The suspects have confessed to a series of armed robbery and car snatching escapades perpetrated by the gang," he said.

The police boss said that the suspects were members of a notorious gang, led by one Sampson Nwokocha, popularly called "Grave", who was killed in Umuahia on

December 10 by men of SARS.

He said that after killing the couple, the bandits robbed one Uwaeme Chinedu, before driving toward Bende Road in a Sienna snatched from its owner.

The gang was said to have also attacked some people, including a Deputy Commissioner of Police and Superintendent of Police, said to be returning from a re-run election duty in Arochukwu Local Government Area (LGA).

Okon expressed joy that the command recovered the weapons, including pump action, used by Grave.

He said that the command recovered the Sienna and weapons used by the gang, including two pump action guns, three live cartridges and one expended cartridge.

He said that Obilor, who succeeded Grave as the gang leader, was also using one of the pump action guns, allegedly used by Grave before he was killed.<sup>close</sup>

He said that operatives of the command also arrested scores of kidnap and armed robbery suspects in Umuahia and Aba, including David Nwokeoma, 32, and Chikaodi Aloh, 25, who allegedly abducted one Rev. Kenneth Nwuke, of Amaede in Amaitoli, Isialangwa South LGA.

He said that investigation into the activities of the suspects were still ongoing.

Okon said that the greatest challenge facing the command was the lack of cooperation from members of the public in volunteering creditable information to the police.

“The major challenge is the people. We work with information but this is a community that celebrate crime and criminality,” he said.

He said that community leaders often “instigate their youths to attack policemen who come to arrest criminal suspects in their area.”

The police chief also said that the gang on January 16 trailed a palm oil merchant, one Basil Odoemelum, after he reportedly withdrew about N2 million from the bank and shot him near the General Post Office, Umuahia and dispossessed him of his money. The victim died the following day at the Federal Medical Centre, Umuahia, where he was receiving treatment from the bullet wounds.

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