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Gunmen suspected to be militants on Sunday night stormed Ayobo in Ipaja-Ayobo Local Council Development Area (LCDA) of Lagos State and killed a man, Sunday Etajuwa.

They boarded their boat and left, but returned few minutes later and started shooting sporadically.

They allegedly returned to abduct a man, Oluseun Ogunyemi and his family but were stopped by the police.

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The gunmen, numbering about nine, were said to have stormed Ogunyemi Street in the Ijon community of Ayobo and attempted to abduct Ogunyemi, his wife and three children.

Also on Sunday night, suspected militants stormed Ikorodu and abducted a woman.

The hoodlums, who stormed the area on motorcycles, blocked the woman on the road and whisked her away.

*The Nation* gathered that the hoodlums also vandalised people's properties at Elepete in Ikorodu that fateful day.

Police Chief Fatai Owoeni visited Ayobo yesterday, promising to deploy marine policemen to the area.

According to Owoseni, the police engaged the kidnappers in gun battle and rescued Ogunyemi's wife and children after he escaped.

He said: "The police got information about the kidnap and they swung into action. The kidnappers came in a boat but as they were escaping with their victims the police engaged them in a gun duel for close to four hours and the kidnappers were subdued by the superior shooting power of the police. They abandoned their victims and escaped. The family is safe and we are on the trail of the kidnappers to know their motive. We appreciate the efforts of the community members who assisted in the rescue operation."

Owoseni said: "At about 9pm, a group of kidnappers went to a community in Ayobo, Kande in Ishefun in boat. As usual, they came to look for targets and they came through water. Earlier, the police had been alerted to the unusual coming of some people that came in military camouflage. With that information, the police in Ayobo had prepared themselves that anything could happen. So at about



9pm when we got the information that they went to a household and picked a woman with three kids, we swung into action. The children's ages are six, four years and four months.

"They had taken the woman into the boat but because of the proactive measures that we took prior to that time, they could not go far. The police team had mapped out a strategy to block them through the exit route that we know they were going to take. So at the time they were going, they met with that police resistance and of course there were few exchanges of fire. We were lucky that members of the community rose in support of the police.

With the heat mounted on the kidnappers, they were forced to abandon the boat with the captives and God being on our side, they are safe. Unfortunately, it's a place we couldn't reach immediately in order to retrieve the boat they used. But we were able to get the Marine team with the local boat operators to that site. They've taken away the boat.

"We have continued to emphasise that the police will work with members of the community. This is an excellent evidence of partnership with the community. The baale in that area and the entire people in that community supported us. We use this opportunity to seek the support of the members of the public because when we join hands like this, we would be recording successes and foiling criminal operations. We have been working on information to see if we can get a hint as to the motive of the kidnapping in order to get the perpetrators."

The rescued, Mrs. Tunrayo Ogunyemi, who lives at 1, Ogunsanya Street, said: "My children and I were in the room then. We had just finished eating and I spread mat for them to sleep. I suddenly heard my husband screaming for help. That was how I peeped through the window to see what was happening. Then I saw some young boys holding guns. I became scared and couldn't come out. I ran away first, later he came back to see if he could help us. Suddenly I saw those people by the window and I shouted that he should run away.

So I stayed in the room, full of fear with the children. I started crying and they came to the door asking me to open it. I told them I couldn't and I started praying. They said they would kill me if I don't come out peacefully. At that time I had defecated on my body to the extent that I didn't know what I was doing. By the time they forced the door open, they ordered me to lie down facing the floor. So I was praying they should not cut my neck and my children's, thinking that was how I would end my life journey. So they asked me to follow them out. I saw that they were many; they told me to move till we got to the boat.

"Then someone shouted again and they rushed to meet the person. Then one of them was waiting to keep an eye on me but suddenly, he left. That was how I ran away with my children through the swamp. Then I heard the police noise. Maybe, they left at the sight of the police."

Reliving his ordeal, Ogunyemi said: "I thank the police. When it happened on Sunday around 9:30pm, I came out of the room to pee. Suddenly someone said I should look back. He then said, don't move, if you move I will fire you. Before I knew it, they grew in number. I started running and they followed me but at a point they reneged.

"Then I thought of my wife and family. I was looking for them. Then she told me to run because the kidnappers were still around. After they heard her speak, four of them chased me again for about one kilometre. But I thank the police because they were on ground. Then I went to our traditional ruler, the Baale. He wasn't around but I met policemen as I was coming back. They followed me to my house."

The Baale thanked the commissioner and enjoined him to tighten security in the community during the Eid-El-Fitri celebrations to check crimes.

Ogunyemi said he did not know why he and his family were targeted.

He said: "I went out to ease myself but as I turned to go back inside my house I saw a man standing and he said if I shout, he will kill me. I turned and noticed they were three men holding guns. I miraculously escaped but they left with my family. The police rescued them. I am grateful to the police for rescuing my family."

On the abducted woman in Ikorodu, the command's spokesperson, Dolapo Badmos, a Superintendent of Police (SP), said the command would apprehend the culprits.

She declined comment on the man killed at Ayobo.

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