

Gunmen snatch deputy governor's pilot vehicle, kill policeman

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Dare devil gunmen, suspected to be cult members, on Thursday night snatched a pilot vehicle attached to the Cross River State deputy governor, Prof Ivvara Esu and shot dead a policeman in the process.

The incident happened along Goldie Street opposite the NNPC filling station in Calabar at about 7pm, when the pilot vehicle ran into a group of heavily armed gunmen who were said to be marching along the streets in the area.

A source told The Nation that the driver of the vehicle and the police were their way home after the day's work when they ran into the gunmen.

The state capital has been under siege since last Sunday following a renewed clash between rival cult groups in the city. Since then, about 15 deaths have been reported due to the conflict.

On Tuesday night, a Police Inspector was killed along Nkwa Street in Calabar while on patrol by a group of cultists.

A source who witnessed the incident, said: "After the executive council meeting at the Governor's office in Calabar yesterday, the pilot vehicle led others cars as the escorted the deputy governor to his house.

"After that, the vehicle proceeded to drop the security men in the vehicle in their homes. While they were driving along that Goldie Street axis, they ran into a traffic jam caused by a group of cultists operating in the area. The cultists, numbering over 20, were armed with guns and machetes. When the cultists descended on the pilot vehicle, they shot the driver and drove off with the car. The other people in the car scampered for safety."

The Police Public Relations Officer, Irene Ugbo, confirmed the saying incident, saying the policeman did not make it.

However, Ugbo denied that the gunmen went away with the vehicle, saying it had been recovered.

She said no arrests have been made, adding that investigations were ongoing.