

News

Imo: POLICE KILL SUSPECTED KIDNAP

A SUSPECTED kidnaper, **Sampson Okwudirigbo**, who was said to have been terrorising Imo residents from his base in **Port Harcourt**, has been shot dead.

The Police Spokesman in Imo, Mr Linus Nwaiwu, told newsmen in Owerri, that the suspect was trailed to his girl friend's house in Port Harcourt, where he was shot while attempting to attack the policemen who went for his arrest.

Nwaiwu said that the kidnaper, whose remains were seen lying on the premises of the police headquarters, Owerri, died while he was being brought back to Owerri in the morning.

The police paraded a member of the gang, who hails from Ohaji/Egbema Local Government Area of Imo and said to be **Okwudirigbo's point man** in the state.

Police claimed that the gang was responsible for some of the kidnap cases in different parts of the state in recent time.

The police also said that it smashed a syndicate, which included a member of staff of

a new generation bank in Owerri, that specialised in the use of the cell phone to extort money from unsuspecting members of the public.

The bank official and his girl friend also in police net, reportedly conspired with two other members of the syndicate to extort 500,000 Naira from one Mrs Margaret Oparaigbo.

Speaking with newsmen, the alleged leader of the syndicate, Master Maxwell Ndubuisi, admitted that he sent a text message to **Oparaigo**, demanding the payment of 1 million Naira ransom or risk the kidnap of her husband, Mr Vincent Oparaigbo.

Ndubuisi further said that their "claim that we are hired killers" in the text was meant to put fear in the woman and make her pay the money, "but added, "I cannot hurt a fly."

Police said Oparaigbo, complying with a directive from the syndicate, later lodged in 50,000 Naira into a bank account, allegedly opened by the banker's girlfriend, with a different name, Victoria

KING PING

Nneka Okoro.

Oparaigbo later alerted the bank, urging it "to track down anyone who makes enquiry about the account."

"It was when the girl friend came to withdraw the money that the police arrested her,"

the police spokesman said.

The accomplice confessed to newsmen that she was persuaded by her banker friend to open the account "to enable his friend (Maxwell) access some money he was expecting."

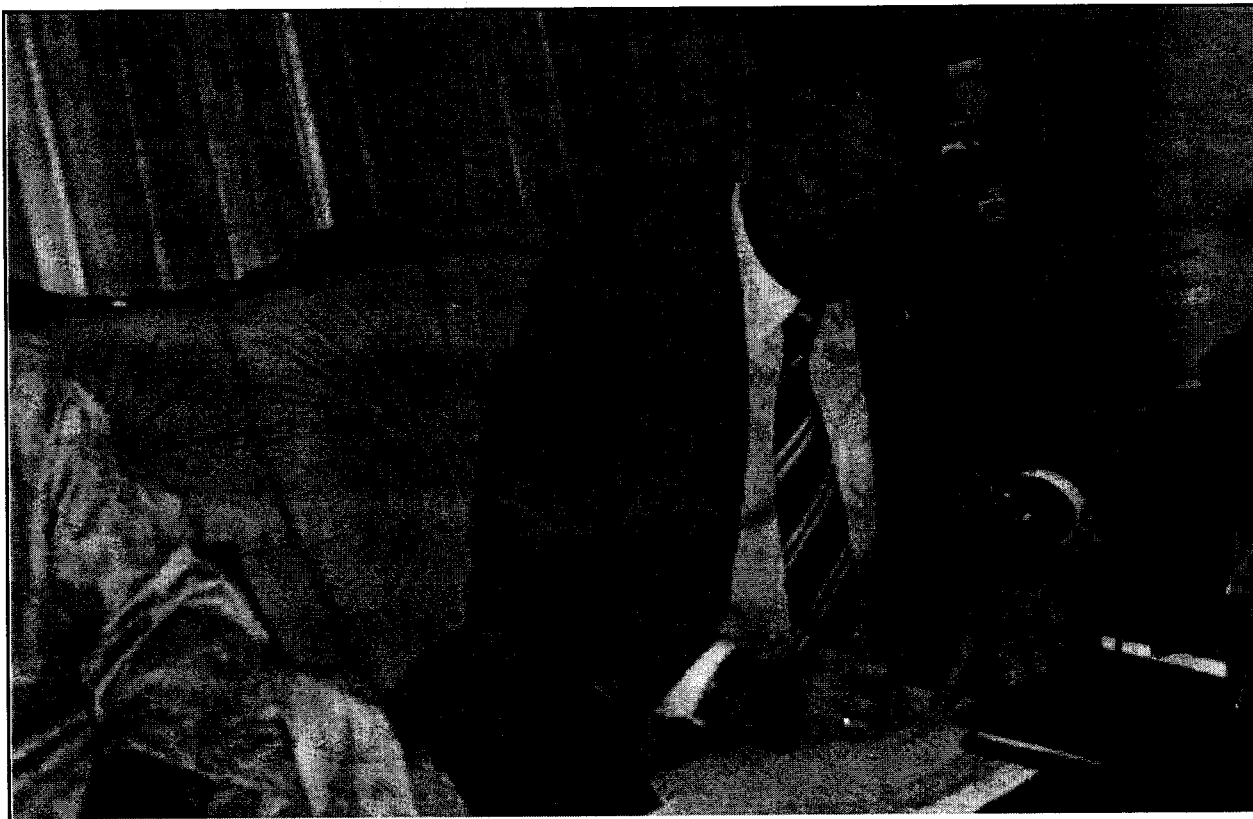
Meanwhile, the command on Saturday took delivery of two new 4X4 Ford Ranger vehicles donated by an Abuja-based company to assist it in the fight against crime in the state.

The executive director of the company, Mr Tony Orji, while presenting the vehicles to the Commissioner of Police, Mr Alloy Okorie, said that the gesture was the company's

contribution toward crime reduction in the state.

Receiving the vehicles on behalf of the Inspector-General of Police, Okoroe pledged that the command would deploy them to effective use.

He gave the assurance that the command would not relent in its efforts to bring "crime and criminality in the state", especially kidnapping, to the barest minimum."



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