

Metro

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... crime, security, court

Our leader came from Zamfara with 23 men — Suspected kidnappers

• Oyo police arrest WAEC officials' suspected kidnappers, parade 14 other suspects

By OLUWATOYIN MALIK AND
ADEWALE OSHODI

OPERATIVES of Federal Special Anti-Robbery Squad (F-SARS) in Oyo State Police Command have arrested suspected kidnappers whose gang was responsible for the abduction of two officials of the West African Examination Council (WAEC) last week in the state.

Parading members of the kidnap gang among other suspected criminals at the state police headquarters, Eleyele, Ibadan, on Thursday, the state Commissioner of Police, Mr Abio-

dun Odude, said the arrests were made as a result of the command's community policing involving aggressive stop and search, purposeful vehicle patrol, intelligence-led gathering and public partnership.

Mr Odude said the challenge of attacks and kidnapping along the Igbeti/Igboho axis of the state was being combated, as the command had moved in Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) and adequate personnel to protect lives and property in the affected areas.

On how the kidnappers were arrested, the police boss confirmed that for

some time, the armed robbery and kidnap gang had been terrorising the towns of Kishi, Igboho and Igbeti, in Oke-Ogun area of the state, maiming and killing innocent victims after dispossessing them of their money and other valuable property.

"The hoodlums, numbering about 25, who are mainly herdsmen, were recruited by one Mallam, a notorious armed robbery kingpin who, it was gathered, usually came from Zamfara State, but is still at large.

"The gang is responsible for the death of some of their kidnapped victims,

while some were kept in their seemingly impregnable fortress at the Old Oyo National Park for some days before being freed after collecting huge ransom from their family members.

"Therefore, following the report about the activities of the notorious gang, police set in motion necessary intelligence about the modus operandi, strength and location of the gang, while working in concert with the local vigilance group in the area.

"The command's Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) was able to bust three members of the gang, Mohammed Kote (25), Mohammed

Legi (26) and Kire Babuga (20), along Kishi/Igboho Road and inside the Old Oyo National Park, Igbeti, and they confessed to the various crimes perpetrated in the areas.

"The suspects and 13 others arrested with them are currently assisting the police in its investigation, with a view to arresting other members of the gang, most especially the leader, who it was alleged comes from Zamfara State to coordinate the crimes," Odude said.

He stated further that four locally-made single-barrelled guns, three cutlasses, seven mobile phones, N67,420, and a motorcycle with registration number 607WZ, belonging to one of the abducted victims who was killed, were recovered during the operation which lasted for several days.

The police also arrested an Ibadan-based armed robbery gang responsible for carrying out robbery attacks on residents of Iwo Road, Amuloko, Aremo, Oremoji-Agugu, and other areas of the capital city.

The police boss said one of the suspects, Adeniyi Sunday (28) a.k.a Akuru, who was returning from a robbery operation at Sawmill area of Egbeda at about 5:30a.m. on February 24, was arrested with items stolen from their victims.

"The suspect, who just got his freedom from prison, confessed to the crime, and his confession led to the arrest of another member of the gang, Shola Oyeleke (25) a.k.a One Blow, in his hideout.

"Further diligent investigation by SARS operatives further led to the arrest of three more members of the gang, Sodiq Bashiru (24) a.k.a Omo Alhaja, Oye-wole Sangodade (39) a.k.a Oye (criminal receiver and gang's armourer) and Ismaila Olamilekan (29), another criminal receiver.

"Exhibits recovered from the gang include two locally-made guns, seven stolen mobile phones, two Plasma television sets, two OX-Standing fans, one blue Tiger generator, one LG

DVD player, a gas cylinder and N113,8000," Odude said, while confirming that all the suspects would be charged to court upon completion of investigation into their cases.

Police smash visa racketeering gang in Lagos

By OLUWATOYIN MALIK

A 26-year-old suspected cyber crime kingpin, Samuel Olowobola Gbonyega has been arrested by the Lagos State Police Command, just as his fraud haven at 48, Allen Avenue, Ikeja, was dismantled.

Disclosing the suspect's arrest on March 1 and arraignment at the Magistrates' Court 2, Ikeja on March 5, in a press statement on Thursday, the state Police Public Relations Officer, SP Chike Oti said it followed a petition addressed to the Commissioner of Police, Lagos State, Edgal Imohimi, by one Antonio Kaplanis of the Embassy of Greece, Abuja.

In the petition, the PPRO stated, the suspect was accused of fraudulently obtaining huge sums of money from unsuspecting Nigerians seeking visa to travel to Europe, by claiming to be an employee of the Embassy of Greece who had been given a mandate to make visa procurement easy for applicants.

Oti said that the police commissioner deployed crack detectives from the State Intelligence Bureau (SIB) to fish out the culprit and his partners in crime.

"They (detectives) located the suspect's hideout and carried out a sting operation on him. During the operation, some Nigerian passports, laptops and other visa related documents were recovered from the criminal's operating theatre," the PPRO added.

The PPRO also said that the suspect denied the allegation against him, but added that "the weight of evidence against him is too heavy."



The suspected kidnappers during their parade at the Oyo State Police Command headquarters, Eleyele, Ibadan.

Borno acid attack victim calls for justice

A 23-year-old acid attack victim in Maiduguri, Borno State, Fatima Usman, on Wednesday, appealed to security agencies in the state to fish out the perpetrators of the attack on her.

The *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* reported that suspected tricycle operators attacked Fatima, who is a final year student of the Department of Nursing, University of Maiduguri, on March 16 at Shagari quarters in Maiduguri.

Fatima made the call on her hospital bed at the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital (UMTH), where she had been receiving treatment from the injuries sustained in the attack.

She told NAN that the arrest of the attackers would allow justice to take its course and protect other

women from similar attacks.

Recounting her ordeal, Fatima said that she boarded a tricycle at Bank Road and met two male passengers sitting in the rear seat.

She said that one of them suddenly brought out a white handkerchief from his pocket, adding that the attacker poured powder on it and put it on her face.

"I became unconscious and they dumped me at Royal quarters in Shagari low-cost area.

"They bathed my face and other parts of my body with corrosive fluid.

"I could not recognise all of them; but I can identify the one who brought out the handkerchief and covered my face with it.

"I call for justice to be served. The police should

arrest the persons who attacked me and bathed me with acid," she said.

Fatima also sought for prayers for her quick recovery.

The Chairman, Medical Advisory Committee (CMAC) of the UMTH, Dr Bashir Tahir, said that the victim was in a stable condition.

Tahir, however, explained that medical examinations showed that Fatima would undergo four different stages of surgeries due to the fatal damages to her body tissues.

"For now she has been recuperating, but she will have to undergo surgical operation on the face, head, and shoulder," Tahir said.

The victim's mother, Hajiya Jummai commended the hospital management, the state government and well-wishers for their support on the plight of her daughter.



The acid victim