

## Three Suspected Kidnappers Shot Dead In Kogi

By Tribune Online      On Sep 14, 2019

METRO



Three suspected kidnappers have been shot dead in Kogi State during a shooting encounter with a combined team of soldiers, policemen and local hunters.

The state police command's Public Relations Officer, ASP William Aya, who confirmed this to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Lokoja on Saturday, said that two of the kidnappers also escaped with gunshot injuries.

Aya said that the five-man armed kidnappers had, on September 11, kidnapped six persons between Iyamoye and Ekinrinade road in Ijumu Local Government Area of the state.

The kidnappers, who were masked, were said to have, on the said day, kidnapped Chief Ganiyu Popoola, the Elemoh Aran of Omu-Aran, his brother, Dr Sule Popoola, their nephew, a woman and her husband, said to be a medical doctor, and an unidentified victim.

They were said to be travelling to Lokoja in their separate vehicles when they and another commercial bus ran into a roadblock mounted by the suspects.

The driver of the commercial bus was, however, able to quickly manoeuvre his vehicle and escape with a bullet-shattered windscreen towards Omuo-Oke, a border town between Ekiti and Kogi States.

The kidnappers, after robbing their victims, later marched them into the nearby thick forest.

Popoola, one of the victims, who spoke with NAN, said that the kidnappers took them to their hideouts where they were detained for hours before they released him, his brother and the only woman among them.

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He said that they were given instructions to go and look for ransom to secure the release of others.

Before releasing them, Popoola, who spoke on the telephone, said that their captors took their phone numbers and returned their handsets to them.

He said that they trekked for hours before finding their way out of the forest and came out at a spot at Egbeda-Egga community.

On coming out, Popoola said that they sighted two policemen on leg patrol and some other people who they narrated their ordeals to.

He said that it was while doing this that some armed soldiers, led by a major, came to join them, saying that the soldiers were informed of the incident by the driver of the commercial bus who was lucky to escape.

Popoola said that the soldiers, numbering about five, the two policemen and the head of local hunters in Egbeda-Egga, led them back to the kidnappers' hideouts.

He said that the head of local hunters, being familiar with the terrain, asked them some questions, and with answers given to him, was able to lead them to the hideouts with ease.

On sighting them, he said that the kidnappers opened fire, adding that the security agents immediately engaged them in a fierce gun duel