

of his residence located at Iwhrekpokpor quarters, in Ughelli metropolis. The magistrate, who works in Oleh Magisterial district, Isoko South Local Government Area of the state, was driven off to an unknown destination in his official Honda Civic car.

A pastor of All Saints Pentecostal Assembly, Reverend J. Israel is another victim. He was taken captive at Ekredjabor area of Ughelli on 19 August 2012 as he was driving to church in the company of his two children. His adversaries, numbering four, forcefully took him away, leaving his children behind. A week prior to that, five persons were abducted in Ughelli. One of them, a businessman, was shot twice in the thigh and his Honda car sprayed with bullets as he tried to escape.

Not all attempts have been successful, though. In July, the plot to abduct the Delta State Head of Service, Mr. Okey Ofili in Asaba, was thwarted by some policemen. This occurred at Summit Road Junction on the Asaba-Benin highway while he was on his way back home after church service. But he was left with gunshot injuries. When he resisted the hoodlums, they shot him in the leg. The boom of the shot attracted cops, who pursued the kidnappers. They however escaped.

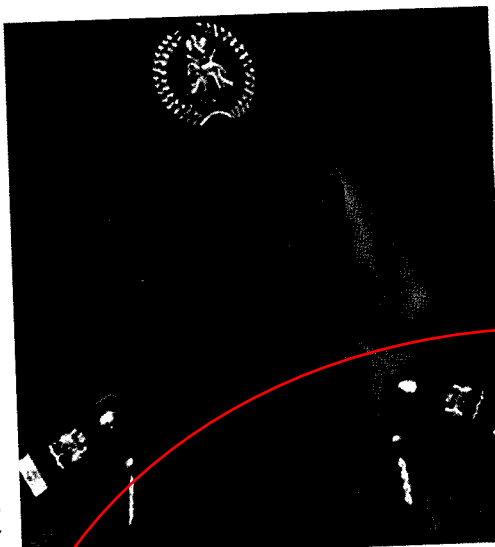
Also in the same month, Mr. Uchenna Abueme, a National Youth Service Corps, NYSC, member serving in Delta State, was abducted from Asaba by three men and driven to Okpanam. The kidnappers abandoned their victim when the police gave them a hot chase. He was found after 28 hours.

A month earlier, Markson Macaulay, 28, son of Ovuozorie Macaulay, Secretary to the State Government, was kidnapped in Ozoro, headquarters of Isoko North Local Government Area. He had just returned home from a foreign trip and visited his grandmother in Owhelegbo. It happened after 70-year-old Samuel Uduaghan, Governor Uduaghan's cousin, was abducted, on the 13th of the month. The criminals followed Pa Uduaghan to his Direct Labour Agency layout, Asaba and took him away. It was a

daredevil attack as it took place when Mohammed Abubakar, the Inspector-General of Police, was in Asaba to take delivery of 60 pick-up vans, two armoured personnel carriers, and other communication equipment donated by Uduaghan to the Nigeria Police. And it happened when CSP Dickson Adeyemi, head of the state anti-kidnapping squad – who had been accused of aiding abductors and was recalled to Abuja for investigations – returned to the state, albeit not to the same post.

Even sportsmen have fallen victim. When Christian Obodo, Super Eagles and Udinese of Italy midfielder, came into Nigeria in June, criminal minds got wind of his arrival and trailed him to Effurun, near Warri, and kidnapped him at the Zion Ministry Church located on New Layout Road, where he went to worship.

On 23 April, Madam Suzanne Elumelu, the



•Abubakar: Embarrassed by kidnappers during a trip to Delta State

a native of Owahawa in Ughelli South Local Government Area of the state, was so haunted by his crime that he confessed to the police eight months after. The female victim, whom he buried in his compound, hailed from Uzere in Isoko South Local Government Area of the state.

According to the Delta State Police Public Relations Officer, Charles Muka the suspect confessed to burying the victim alive in his compound "when she became weak".

Self-acclaimed men of God are also among kidnappers. Pastor Emmanuel Abuvom, of the African Church, Ewreni, was recently arrested and paraded for allegedly aiding a foreigner to abduct a three-year-old girl. Pretending to be her parents, the pastor, in cahoots with a Cameroonian, abducted the child from her school, Marvel International Schools, Ughelli, and kept her in captivity for four days before she was finally rescued by the police.

### Why Delta Is Fertile Ground For Kidnappers

#### •Unemployment

Recently, Olorogun Gbagi who, after a judge was kidnapped gave a lecture in which he espoused ways to end the spate of kidnapping in the state, expressed relief that the governor had opted for one of them – embarking on mass employment. Gbagi said: "I want massive employment of Deltans, the government should mop up and register all the unemployed in local government areas in the state and get jobs for them. If jobs cannot be immediately provided, they should be paid a monthly allowance of N10,000 for their upkeep, while government helps them to get a means of livelihood."

The state, he said, is rich enough to do this. "It is after providing them jobs that government can start separating the real criminals from those who were forced into criminality by joblessness," he said.

#### •Greed

But the governor did not agree with Gbagi's position. Inaugurating the anti-kidnapping squad, Uduaghan described abductors



•Gbagi: Wants state of emergency in Delta State over rampant kidnapping