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Ex-general kills kidnapper in gun battle

By Ozioma Ubabukoh, Enugu

Wednesday, 4 Aug 2010

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In a rare display of bravery, a retired General of the Nigerian Army, Joseph Okoloagu, has shot dead a member of a kidnap gang that attempted to abduct him in Aba, Abia State.

Okoloagu, a former Nigerian Military attaché to Pakistan, was on Monday night travelling to Port-Harcourt in his 604 Peugeot car when the kidnappers intercepted the vehicle on Alaoji-Ugwunagbo area of Aba – Port Harcourt Expressway.

The Action Congress member was in company with his private driver and a security detail when the armed kidnappers surfaced from a bush and opened fire on his vehicle, forcing it to a halt.

The kidnappers immediately surrounded the car and one of them wanted to drag out the already wounded ex-Army General who sat at the back seat.

Surprisingly, as soon as he drew near, Okoloagu pulled out his revolver and repeatedly shot the kidnapper, who slumped and died immediately.

According to motorists, who watched the scene from a distance and nearby bushes, the other kidnappers immediately retreated and took cover from where they exchanged fire with the general.

The gunfire attracted an army patrol team and the kidnappers reportedly fled on sighting the soldiers.

The ex-army general and the two other occupants of his car who also sustained bullet injuries were rushed to Riverine Hospital, Umungazi, Aba, where they are receiving medical attention under heavy security provided by a platoon of soldiers from Port-Harcourt, Rivers State.

Okoloagu, who spoke to our correspondent on the phone from his sick bed, said, "Yes, kidnappers attacked us in Aba on my way to Port Harcourt yesterday (Monday). They shot me on the chest, shot my security detail on the hand and shot my driver on the head. I was able to kill one of the kidnappers who came to take me with my revolver before I escaped."

"My driver is still in a coma, but we are praying that the bullet did not touch his brain. I am only alive today because of my personal gun. What of the people who don't have guns?"

"I think everybody in the country should have a gun since the government can no longer protect us. There is no government in Abia State."

When contacted on the phone, Police Public Relations Officer, Abia State Command, Ali Okechukwu, said he was yet to be briefed on any of such incident.

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