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# Police kill Bamigbetan's kidnappers, arrest two

Eniola Akinkuotu

**T**HE Lagos State Police Command says it has arrested members of a kidnapping syndicate suspected to have kidnapped the Chairman, Ejigbo Local Council Development Area, Kehinde Bamigbetan.

According to the police, the suspects were arrested shortly after kidnapping an Indian, Vivex Changrani, in the early hours of Monday.

The Commissioner of Police for the command, Umar Manko, said the suspects were not based in Lagos but only operated in the state on weekends after which they would flee to Ghana.

He said apart from Bamigbetan, the suspects had been involved in a series of high-profile kidnapping including that of a Federal High Court judge in Lagos.

He said, "Based on painstaking investigation and tracking of Nigerian kidnappers who kidnapped Ejigbo LCDA Chairman, Kehinde Bamigbetan, a sitting Federal High Court Judge and other notable individuals in Lagos, a team of detectives, led by the Officer in Charge of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, traced the kidnappers to the Agbara area of Ogun State where the kidnappers have their camp."

"After 72 hours of laying ambush, the policemen stormed the house where the kidnappers were gathered. A gun duel ensued and seven kidnappers were killed. Two of the kidnappers, Ogbonna Emenike and Uchenna Nwanyu, were arrested alive with bullet wounds while four AK47 rifles, 28 AK47 magazines and over 1,000 rounds of AK47 live ammunition were recovered."

"A Honda CRV and a Nissan Pathfinder as well as charms were recovered from them. An Indian national, Vivex Changrani, who was kidnapped at Ikoyi two hours before the operation, was also rescued by the police."

Manko said the suspects were able to evade arrest for so long because they were in Ghana and due to

international law, Nigeria policemen had to collaborate with INTERPOL to track the suspects.

The police boss said the suspects operated in army uniforms which deceived members of the public.

"We discovered that because the suspects operated in army uniform, they easily got away. Sometimes, they could even alight from their vehicles in broad daylight and direct traffic in order to escape," he said.

According to police detectives, who spoke to our correspondent on the condition of anonymity, the suspects lived flamboyant lifestyles in Ghana.

A police source, said the leader of the gang, Jonah Benjamin Osinachi aka China, who was killed during a gun duel with the police, owned a big restaurant in Ghana and other investments which he funded with proceeds from his illegitimate business.

He said, "The suspects only struck during weekends after which they would go back to Ghana. For instance, after kidnapping Bamigbetan, they received \$50,000 (N8m) as

ransom. They went back to Ghana without any money."

"Rather, what they did was to give the money to a bureau de change operator who then helped them to transfer the money through an agent to Ghana."

The suspects however said they were not members of the gang but only friends to the killed suspects.

Nwanyu said, "I am not a kidnapper, China employed me to manage his restaurant

in Ghana and I have been doing that for two years now. I came with China, his wife and two kids on Sunday because they said they wanted to renew their passports at FESTAC."

Another suspect, Emenike, said he was not part of the gang. He said he was only released from prison last Monday and was only at the wrong place at the wrong time.

The Indian victim,

however identified the suspects as his captors. He commended the police for rescuing him less than five hours after his abduction.

He said, "I have been living in Nigeria for seven years and I work for a plastic-manufacturing company. On Sunday night, around 12am, I was on Gerard Road, Ikoyi, when men in army uniform flagged down my vehicle. They jumped into my car

and pushed me into the back seat.

"An hour later, they pushed me into their own vehicle blindfolded me. After some hours, they took me to their house and locked me in a room and told me to sleep. Around 5am, I started hearing gunshots when the police identified themselves, I screamed for help and they rescued me. The police did a fantastic job."



•The suspects. Inset: Changrani  
Photos: Eniola Akinkuotu



## Customs seize 2,500

Sesan Olufowobi

**T**HE Nigeria Customs Service, Federal Operations Unit, A, Ikeja, Lagos State, says it has seized 2,250 of parboiled rice of 50kg each.

A statement by NCS said the Controller of the unit, Mahmoud Nuhu, stated this on Monday at the headquarters of the operations unit in Ikeja.

Nuhu, who put the value of the seized goods at N12.3m, said the consignments were intercepted at Agbara waterside on June 21 by



officials of the unit around 4.45am. He said, "It is my pride,

honour and privilege to announce the spectacular seizure of large quantity

of 50kg parboiled smuggled through the unapproved routes.

"It is important to note here that the operations from customs headquarters were instrumental in strategic planning, necessitated the seizure, however, executed by the Operations Unit."

Nuhu said if the smugglers had decided to do anything, government would have made N1.1m off the goods.

The customs bureau recently resumed