

Kidnapped Kaduna pastor found dead, abductors release others

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Godwin Isenyo, Kaduna.

The decomposing body of one of the three Christian clerics abducted at gunpoint by yet-to-be identified gunmen in Kaduna State has been found.

President of the United Church of Christ in Nigeria, also known as HEKAN, Rev. Emmanuel Dzigga; Rev. Yakubu Dzarma; and Rev. Iliya Anto, were abducted on March 21 along the Kaduna-Abuja Expressway where they had gone to check a piece of land for the church seminary.

However, while Dzigga and Dzarma regained their freedom after 10 days in captivity, Anto, who is also HEKAN vice president, was found dead.

The General Secretary of HEKAN, Rev. Jibrailu Wobiya, said Dzigga and Dzarma were freed on Wednesday and were receiving treatment in an undisclosed hospital in Kaduna.

It was gathered that Anto had been undergoing treatment for an undisclosed ailment before his kidnap.

A source at the church told our correspondent that he died because he was left unattended to by the kidnappers.

“His body was almost decomposing,” he said.

He said a day after their abduction, the kidnappers had called to inform them that Anto was ill and they had dropped him at a location in the bush.

He said, “But when we dispatched people to the location to take him, we couldn’t get him after combing the area.

“The kidnappers, who might have been watching us from their hideout, said we sent too many people to pick him up, so they refused to give further description of the location and we thought they must have gone back with him.”

He added that the other two clerics were not looking good after they regained freedom.

He said, “The person who went to get them drove them on a motorcycle from where they dropped them for four hours before they could reach a good road. This has been very traumatic for them and they need some rest.

“We don’t want people to disturb them until they are psychologically and physically fit.”

The source declined to say whether a ransom was paid for the release of the clerics or not.