

Gunmen abduct Lagos monarch, baby, two others

July 18, 2016

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Oba Goriola Oseni

Afeez Hanafi and Olaleye Aluko

Some gunmen have abducted the traditional ruler of Iba community, Lagos State, Oba Goriola Oseni – the Oniba of Iba land.

Also abducted were a woman, her three-month-old baby, and a businessman.

PUNCH Metro learnt that the gunmen, who were suspected to be militants, stormed the community in two speedboats on Saturday around 10.30pm.

They were said to have shot dead one of the palace guards and a motorcycle rider.

The monarch's wife, Kuburat, who sustained gunshot injuries, was reportedly rushed to a hospital for treatment.

A resident, Ifayemi Yomi, said the gunmen announced their presence with sporadic gunshots which made everyone to scamper to safety.

He said, "The gunmen came in at about 10pm, shooting indiscriminately. They had earlier gone to the Agbede area of Ikorodu, and tried to abduct some oil dealers; but they failed. They then made their way to Iba through the waterways.

"They went to the palace and dragged the traditional ruler out. The residents tried to prevent their entry into the palace and one of them, who worked with the Neighbourhood Watch, was shot dead. A motorcycle rider was also killed."

Another resident, identified only as Muiyiwa, said people in the area had started leaving in droves.

He said, "My wife and I initially thought vigilantes were at work, but with the persistence of the shooting, we sensed the community was under attack.

"The gunshots woke up my two children. For one hour, I was confused. My wife, the children and I held on to one another. It was this morning (Sunday) that I heard that the king was abducted by militants. They killed his guard and shot his wife in the leg."

A source explained that the community had become volatile due to the operations of the militants, calling on the Lagos State Government and security agencies to rise up to the challenge.

He said, "It seems the militants are becoming too powerful for the government. If measures are not taken to check their excesses, they will take over all the riverine areas in Lagos and Ogun states.

"Last week, a landlord was abducted in an estate around here. He has not been released till now because his family has not been able to raise the ransom the kidnappers demanded.

"For now, I am leaving my house until the government is able to bring the situation under control."

Another source in the palace said policemen had been deployed in the creeks around the area.

The elder brother of the abducted monarch and the Oloto of Otto, Oba Josiah Aina, who spoke with *PUNCH Metro* on the phone, said the family had not been contacted for any ransom.

He said, "We have not been contacted for ransom. The monarch's wife is receiving treatment in a Lagos hospital."

Our correspondent gathered that earlier on Friday, the gunmen abducted a woman, her three-month-old baby and a businessman.

A source said the incident happened on Victory Estate in the Iba area.

He said, "The gunmen came into the estate around 9pm on Friday and abducted the woman and her three months old baby.

"They demanded N30m for their release. Around 11.30pm of the same day, a businessman, Mr. Christian, was kidnapped and his family was requested to pay N30m. Someone offered them N3m for his release, but they refused."

The Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer, SP Dolapo Badmos, confirmed the kidnap of the monarch.

She said the command was working with the Ogun State Police Command to rescue the victim and arrest the suspects.

She said, "It is a new trend. Because they can no longer vandalised pipelines, these militants have resorted to kidnapping. The command has been arresting them and rescuing their victims. The latest will not be different.

"The Lagos and Ogun states governments are getting involved in the operation. We are optimistic that this problem will soon come to an end."