

Kogi killings: Police arrest DPO, six policemen

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Acting Inspector-General of Police, Ibrahim Idris

Friday Olokor, Abuja

NO fewer than seven policemen including a Divisional Police Officer, James Ekpeta, have been arrested and detained by the Kogi State Police Command in connection with the killing of three persons in Ejegbo, Ankpa Local Government Area of the state.

The victims are Julius Maha, 33; Emmanuel (his cousin) 35, and one of their friends allegedly killed by policemen from the Ankpa division of the Nigerian Police Force who stormed their home.

The case file of the incident, which took place in the early hours of Thursday, June 23, 2016, had also been transferred to the homicide department of the force for further investigation.

Meanwhile, the homicide team has obtained the statement of alleged kidnap victim, Hajiya Aishatu

Abubakar, of Enabo quarters.

The woman was said to have told the police that the three deceased persons ~~were~~ not those who attempted to kidnap her.

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investigation of the killing was sequel to a petition by the family's lawyer, Mr. Tony Ejumejowo, the Kogi State Commissioner of Police.

1 source told *PUNCH Metro* that the command had interrogated about seven of its officers in connection with the matter.

said "The police have, on the instructions of the then commissioner (Emmanuel Ojukwu), before transfer, swung into action. The matter is being investigated by the homicide department. The police command had visited the Ankpa community and had interrogated about seven policemen including the DPO and the medical doctor who allegedly issued a coroner's report.

From the police records, preliminary investigation revealed that the DPO and one other officer were the persons in the division who fired their guns that day. There was a meeting of the Deputy Commissioner of Police and the CID with the family representatives and their lawyers. In attendance were the homicide team investigating the incident; the DPO of Ankpa division, James Ekpeta, and an Assistant Superintendent of Police, Eteng Mbang.

"I can confirm to you that the DPO and the ASP, who is the Head of Patrol and Guard at the Ankpa division were detained on the orders of the DCP, after listening to the DPO's account of the incident. The DCP said he was not satisfied with the accounts."

When contacted, the spokesperson for the Kogi State Police Command, Mr. Ovyie Williams, confirmed the arrests and detention, but said investigations were still on.

Williams said, "Yes, they were arrested, but investigation is ongoing."

The DPO was said to have in his statement claimed that he got an anonymous call informing him that a kidnap gang responsible for a failed abduction attempt two days earlier, were going out for another operation and he was given the deceased's address as their hideout.

He reportedly admitted that he personally led a patrol team that night but ordered the team to wait behind while only he and the ASP advanced and engaged them by killing the three persons who had locally-made pistols in their various pockets.

The DPO was also reported to have claimed that he believed some others who had rifles escaped.

When asked by the lawyers what part of the body the deceased were shot, the DPO was said to have answered that he did not know.

The source said, "The alleged autopsy report showed all three of them had bullet wounds on the abdomen and when asked how come his shots and that of the ASP who shot randomly from a distance and in the darkness of the night aimed precisely the same spots on the bodies of the three deceased, he had no answer."

According to the lawyer, "The homicide team had also obtained the statement of the alleged kidnap victim, (Hajiya Aishatu Abubakar, who told the police that she did not identify the three deceased persons as those who attempted to kidnap her." **Copyright PUNCH.**

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