

Three killed in foiled UK returnee's abduction

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Delta State Commissioner of Police, Zanna Ibrahim Mohammed

Ovie Okpare, Warri

Three suspected kidnappers were reportedly shot dead by policemen on Thursday in Asaba, the Delta State capital, during an attempt to abduct a United Kingdom-based Nigerian who had returned home to spend the festive season with his family.

The suspects were said to have been killed during an exchange of gunfire with the crack team of the state police command as the incident created palpable tension in the busy Benin-Asaba-Onitsha Expressway.

It was learnt that commuters and residents took to their heels following the incident as many travellers fled for cover in the

bush.

According to eyewitnesses, the suspects who dressed as evangelists had stormed a popular motor park in an ash-coloured Toyota Corolla car awaiting the arrival of the unnamed UK returnee.

A police source confirmed to our correspondent that a mole within the family of the UK-based Nigerian had given out information to the gang about his relative's return.

"The hoodlums were the first to open fire when they sighted the police but the operatives responded swiftly. Three of the kidnappers were killed in the gun duel," one eyewitness told *Saturday PUNCH*.

The Commissioner of Police in the state, Mr. Zanna Ibrahim, confirmed the incident when contacted on phone, adding that one AK 47 rifle, one pump action gun, one locally-made pistol with 19 rounds of 7.6mm, eight live cartridges and one expended cartridge were recovered from the criminals.