

Kidnappers murder, dump Dangote worker's corpse inside gutter

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Bello

Anna Okon and Samson Folarin

An employee of Dangote Industries Limited, Istifanus Bello, has been killed by suspected kidnappers.

Sources told our correspondents that Bello's corpse was found in a gutter in Ogun State, adding that one of the kidnappers alerted a member of the public to where the corpse was.

Bello was believed to have been kidnapped three weeks ago, but news of his murder got to his family members on Monday.

Sources close to the family told our correspondents that Bello was the company's Human Resources Manager before his death.

PUNCH Metro learnt that on the day that he was kidnapped, the manager had gone with a team to pay ransom for the release of some expatriates who had been kidnapped.

It was learnt that on getting there, the kidnappers collected the money and abducted him.

A close friend, who pleaded not to be named, said Bello showed him some video recordings of his negotiations with kidnappers.

Speaking to sympathisers who visited her on Monday, Bello's wife of 20 years, Amina, said the husband was the best, adding that he was a friend and father to their children.

She said, "Bello was a lovely person; if he was not in the house one day, the children would be asking after him endlessly. Now I do not know what to tell the children because he was always chatting with them on the social media. When he was abducted, the children asked me to tell them where he was because all his activities on social media ceased and the children said it was unlike him.

"On the 20th anniversary of our wedding, he told me that I was the best woman, adding that I was the only one who understood him. He has never for one day hurt me; he always said if I was not happy, he would not be happy."

A source in the Dangote Industries, who confirmed the kidnap, however, reacted to the news of Bello's murder with surprise.

When contacted, the firm's Head of Media, Mr. Tony Chiejina, who said Bello was very close to him, also reacted with surprise to the news of his death.

He told our correspondent that he would make some calls and get back.

He had yet to do so as of press time.

Bello's lengthy profile on the professional network portal, *Linkedin*, described him as the Human Resources Manager of Dangote Industries Limited, a graduate from the University of Maiduguri and the Lagos State University.

He said he was a member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management and had a certificate in International Negotiation from Bonn University, Australia. He added that he was a former investigator with the Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency, among others.

He also described himself as “a very versatile human asset who began his early career in criminal justice administration in 1990 as a law enforcement officer.”

The Force Public Relations Officer, Donald Awunah, confirmed the incident, adding that three of the kidnappers had been arrested.

Awunah explained that the suspects were arrested in Ogun, Lagos and Kwara states, saying they confessed to the crime.

He said, “What happened was that five expatriates of the company were kidnapped and the company went into negotiation with the kidnappers.

“The victim was detailed to pay the ransom. The kidnappers, after taking the ransom, seized and killed him.

“They had demanded N100m, but they were paid N5.6m. So, it is probable that they were not satisfied with the money.

“Following the incident, the Inspector-General of Police ordered the Critical Investigation Unit to swing into action. The team was able to arrest the kidnappers and recover the corpse of the deceased in Ijebu Igbo, Ogun State, where they had their hideout.

“The three suspects –Abubakar Gide, Abdulahi Salu and Babuga Adamu – were arrested on November 27 and December 3, 2016, at Ijebu Igbo, Ogun State; Epe, Lagos State, and Ajase Forest, Kwara State. Three AK-47 rifles were recovered from them.”

Awunah urged members of the public to exercise restraint in paying ransoms to kidnappers, adding that security agencies should always be carried along during negotiation to avert loss of lives..”

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