

SARS kill seven robbers, kidnappers in Imo, C'River

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SARS

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The Imo and Cross River states commands of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad on Wednesday killed seven suspected armed robbers and kidnappers. While two robbers were killed by the Imo SARS, five alleged kidnappers were killed by their counterparts in Cross River.

PUNCH Metro learnt that the armed robbers met their Waterloo while exchanging gunfire with the Imo SARS operatives during a robbery.

The incident, our correspondent gathered, occurred around 2am in Ezi-Ogbaku, in the Mbaitoli Local Government Area of the state.

A police source said the SARS commander, Victor Godfrey, mobilised his men to the scene of the crime in the wee hours of the night.

Addressing journalists shortly after the corpses of the slain robbers were conveyed to the state police headquarters in Owerri, the state capital, the Police Public Relations Officer, SP Andrew Enwerem, said

three of the five-man gang fled with gunshot injuries.

He said the robbers, who were moving from house to house to rob, had opened fire on sighting policemen who responded to a distress call.

The police spokesperson said in the ensuing gun battle, two of the hoodlums were gunned down, while three others escaped.

He said, “In the early hours of Wednesday, the operatives of the Federal Special Anti-Robbery Squad of the Imo State Police Command received a distress call that armed robbers were operating at Ezi-Ogbaku. SARS, in conjunction with the Police Mobile Force officers, responded to the emergency around 2am.

“The teams encountered the five armed robbers, who opened fire on the policemen. The officers responded, which led to the death of two of the hoodlums, while three fled with gunshot injuries.”

Enwerem, who noted that the identities of the slain robbers had yet to be ascertained, said the state Commissioner of Police, Chris Ezike, had directed heads of tactical units of the command to apprehend the fleeing criminals.

Exhibits recovered from the slain suspects, according to the police, included one locally-made double-barrelled shotgun, two expended cartridges, and two live cartridges.

In the Cross River State incident, the five suspected kidnappers were shot dead during the rescue of a victim in Ikom, Ikom Local Government Area of the state.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Irene Ugbo, confirmed the incident in Calabar.

She said the suspected kidnappers had abducted a woman, following which the policemen trailed the kidnappers.

Ugbo explained that the police had been on the trail of the kidnappers for four days before the breakthrough.

She said men of the SARS unit, on gathering intelligence, traced the kidnappers to their hideout in a bush, where the gun battle occurred.

The police spokesperson said, “Our men had an encounter with some kidnappers in the Ikom Local Government Area while trying to rescue an abducted woman from their captivity.

“In the process of rescuing the victim, the kidnappers engaged our men in an exchange of gunfire. We were able to rescue the woman, while five of the kidnappers were gunned down.

“We also arrested two of the kidnappers and our men are bringing them down to Calabar as we speak.”

She urged members of the public to avail the command of timely and useful information that could lead to the arrest of suspected criminals.