

METRO PLUS

Police kill Devil, Rivers notorious kidnapper

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File copy: Commissioner of Police, Rivers state, Mustapha Dandaura

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Personnel of the Rivers State Police Command attached to the Bori Division in the Khana Local Government Area of the state, on Sunday, gunned down a kidnap kingpin, Linus Lebari, aka *Devil*.

Lebari was trailed by the police to his gang's hideout in the Okwale forest, a boundary between Rivers and Abia states, around 8.16pm on Sunday, where he was shot dead after a shootout with the security personnel.

The state police spokesman, Mr Nnamdi Omoni, said on Monday that the 35-year-old kidnapper and his fleeing gang members had been terrorising the Ogoni end of the East-West Road, adding that the gang had killed over 30 persons.

Omoni explained that the suspected criminals, upon noticing strange movements around their hideout, opened fire on the policemen and injured two cops in the process.

He added that the police returned fire, killed Lebari and injured his gang members, who took to their heels with bullet wounds.

He said, “The hoodlums, on noticing irregular movements around their camp, started shooting randomly, but in a return of fire from the police, one of them was fatally wounded.

“He was later identified as Linus Lebari from Tekon Sogho, the leader of the kidnap gang responsible for all the attacks in the Ogoni axis of the East-West Road and whose gang had killed over 30 people in the two local government areas of Khana and Gokana after collecting ransom.

“In the operation, two police officers sustained gunshot wounds and are currently responding to treatment, while one locally-made pistol and some cartridges were recovered from the scene.”

Omoni noted that the personnel of the command were on the trail of the fleeing criminals, adding that the state Commissioner of Police, Mustapha Danduara, had vowed to rid the state of criminals and appealed to the people to share credible information about the fleeing criminals with the police.

He added, “Efforts are on to arrest other gang members, who fled with gunshot wounds.

“The Commissioner of Police, Mustapha Dandaura, is again assuring the public that the onslaught against bandits in the state is raging and will not cease until all criminal elements in the state are history, while appealing for cooperation by sharing credible information that will lead to the arrest of these criminals.”