

Gunmen raid Edo highway, kidnap passengers, kill vigilante



• Edo CP, Babatunde Kokumo

Adeyinka Adedipe, Benin

HELL was let loose on Thursday as suspected gunmen took over the ever-busy Benin-Ekpoma-Auchi Road in Edo State with some commuters kidnapped in the attack.

A witness told *PUNCH Metro* that the kidnappers, after seizing a commercial bus, forced the passengers to disembark and led them into a bush.

The driver was reportedly made to block the road with his bus in an attempt to force oncoming vehicles to stop.

"What happened was that the gunmen first attacked a commercial bus at the Urhokosa/Obagie end of the road and took a number of passengers into custody.

"The operation was well planned, as the suspected kidnappers divided themselves into groups. A group led the first set of victims into the bush, while a second group

forced the driver of the bus to use the vehicle to block the road.

"Other vehicles that ran into the traffic jam caused by the blockade were attacked by another group of the kidnappers, who selected victims and marched them to join the earlier captured passengers in the kidnappers' den," the source added.

A member of a vigilance group in the area was reportedly shot dead when he attempted to disrupt the operation.

A motorist, who claimed to have abandoned his vehicle and run into the bush to hide, said he met other people who also escaped into the bush.

He explained that the gunmen shot continuously for a long time without any resistance from security agents.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Chidi Nwabuzor, confirmed the incident.

He said, "Yes, the command is aware of the kidnap, but we have yet to ascertain the number of passengers that were kidnapped.

"A vigilance group in that community engaged the kidnappers and one was killed. Effort is currently ongoing to free those kidnapped. Other information will be revealed as we progress."