

Police, vigilantes kill abductor, rescue 15 victims in Edo

Adeyinka Adedipe, Benin

THE Edo State Police Command has rescued 15 kidnap victims with one suspected kidnapper, whose gang engaged the police in a gun duel, getting shot to death.

The command's spokesperson, Bello Kontongs, in a statement on Monday said the combined team of the police, military and vigilantes rescued the victims.

He said, "On January 9, 2022, at about 9.11pm, operatives of the Edo State Police Command, in collaboration with the military, acted on credible information that armed hoodlums suspected to be kidnappers came out from the bush at Okwo Ogbemudia Farm Benin-Auchi Road and started shooting sporadically on unsuspected vehicles.

"On receipt of the information, the Divisional Police Officer, Ehor Division, CSP Benefa Benjamin, immediately mobilised his team of police operatives and the military at Ehor to the scene where the combined team of operatives sighted a Passat GL vehicle with Reg. No. BEN 628 MS discovered to have veered off the road.

"The combined team got to a palm tree where the driver was already unconscious having been shot in the head and thigh. A female passenger identified as Awoma Jerry, 28, also had injury on her knee and thigh as a result of the sporadic shooting from the armed hoodlums. They were both immediately rushed to a nearby hospital for medical attention.

"Further bush combing was carried out along the powerline axis and at about 11.08pm, the armed hoodlums were seen crossing with some victims. On sighting the team of operatives, the hoodlums engaged them in a gun duel, but the superior fire power of the team of operatives led to the rescue of seven (five male and two female) victims unhurt.

"They are Lucky Ebuade 'M', Flora Ebude 'F', ASP Joseph Okoh 'M', Tina Okiti 'F', Adamu Danusa 'M', Hassan Mohammed 'M' and Tolba Masamavi 'M'. They have since been profiled and asked to continue their journey.

"During the process, one of the kidnappers was gunned down. One locally made gun and one cartridge were recovered from him while others escaped with bullet wound. Intensive bush combing is on with the aim of arresting other fleeing gang members."

According to Kontongs, operatives of the command, in collaboration with local vigilante and hunters, also rescued six victims who were abducted on their way to Edo State for a burial.

He added, "Acting on information that suspected kidnappers have accosted a Toyota Hiace Bus with Reg. No. AB 14 TR driven by one Abdullahi Adamu 'M' and kidnapped 10 passengers along Igueben Opoji Road while conveying a corpse from Taraba State to Iruekpen in Edo State for burial on January 10, 2022 at about 12.45am, the Divisional Police Officer, Ekpoma Division, Bukoye Oyegbemi, immediately swung into action.

"He mobilised team of police operatives, local vigilante and hunters to the scene and embarked on bush combing during which six victims were rescued unhurt while efforts are still ongoing to rescue the remaining four victims and further arrest the suspected kidnappers."