

Police arrest herbalist over alleged kidnap, murder of Anambra monarch

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Anambra State Police Commissioner, Echeng Eworo

The Anambra State Police Command said its operatives arrested one Okwudili Ogana over the abduction and murder of Igwe Oliver Nnaji, the traditional ruler of Ogwaniocha community in the Ogbaru Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Ogana, a native doctor, allegedly masterminded the abduction of the monarch together with some youths in the community.

The gang allegedly invaded the palace of Nnaji on November 15, 2021, razed the building and took him away.

The suspects were apprehended by the police on the premises of a court in Onitsha on March 18 and taken to the Awkuzu Police Station, where they reportedly made confessional statements, which also revealed that the monarch had been killed.

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Confirming the development, the state police spokesman, Tochukwu Ikenga, said the suspects were apprehended through collaborative efforts.

Ikenga said, "We declared 21 persons wanted in connection with the case; members of the public provided us with information that led to the arrest of the suspects. We got information that one of them (Ogana) was seen on the court premises in Onitsha; our men mobilised and got him arrested.

"Because of the collaborations going on with other security agencies, there have been more arrests. It is when we collate all the names that we will actually know the total number of those arrested and their leader."

He added that about 10 of the suspects were arrested by the Special Forces of the Nigerian Naval Base, Onitsha, during a midnight raid on the Ochan forest camp of the gang on December 31, 2021.

However, some members of the community, who stormed the Awkuzu Police Station, where the suspects were kept, demanded that the case be transferred from the station.

They claimed that Ogana and his group had earlier been arrested for another crime and granted bail only to return to terrorise the community.

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Speaking to our correspondent on Monday, the son of the monarch, Prince Nnaji Reginald, and some elders of the community, expressed worry that the suspects were granted bail despite “overwhelming evidence” against them and their confessional statements.

He said, “On Friday, the suspects at the police station admitted to abducting and killing my father. The whole episode saddens my heart because I can’t believe that I will grant an interview over what I least expected in life.

“This is a slap on Ogwuaniocha community sacred stool because the stool has been desecrated. Those found guilty must face the full weight of the law.

“But from all indications, the court in the community is biased because the judge had quashed an earlier case involving the kingpin.

“We don’t want him to continue with the case. If he had not granted bail to the kingpin, my dad would not have been a dead man today.”

Also speaking, the community youth leader, Ignatius Nnaji, expressed disappointment at the state government’s approach to the issue.

“The past administration did not visit the community to ascertain the level of damage. Several lives were lost while over 500 buildings were razed. Over 80 per cent of residents have been rendered homeless. We appeal to Governor Chukwuma Soludo to intervene,” he added.