

Harvest of kidnappers

■ 23 suspects nabbed in Anambra

FROM NGOZI UWUJARE, AWKA

No fewer than 23 suspected members of some kidnapping gangs have been arrested by operatives of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) of the Anambra State Police Command after gunbattles at Okpoko in Ogbaru Local Government Area of the state.

The command has also recovered the victim's money as well as arms and ammunition from the suspects in their hideouts.

The state police commissioner, Mr. Hassan Karma told *Saturday Sun* that the huge arrest was as a result of a total war declared on kidnappers following the abduction of some victims, one of them identified as Mrs. Edith Maduekwe.

It was gathered that Maduekwe was kidnapped on October 4 at Oba in Idemili South Local Government Area. Efforts to rescue her by the James Nwafor (CSP) led SARS team led to a serious gunbattle with the kidnappers at Orankwu, within the same council area.

At the end of the engagement, over 10 suspected kidnappers were arrested, Maduekwe rescued and a ransom of N776, 000, which was part of the N1.4m paid by her friend, was recovered. Items such as AK47 rifles with 90 rounds of ammunition, pump action gun with 10 live cartridges and charms were also said to have been recovered.

In another face-off, three other suspects were arrested, about five killed and their victim killed. In yet another raid, four members of a gang of kidnappers who have been involved in kidnapping in Awka and Onitsha have been arrested, with some arms and ammunition recovered from them.

One of the suspects, Charle Parker was said to have been declared wanted for the past four years by the Anambra State Police Command.

One of the gang leaders, Ike Joseph now in police custody, told *Saturday Sun*: "We went for the last operation and we succeeded. It was while we were sharing the money of the victims that the SARS operatives came to our hideout and round us up. Our leader, Parker opened fire at the police and attempted to escape but they ran after him and he was shot."

CP Karma said the suspects will soon be charged to court.



Arms and ammunition