Abducted 84-yr-old ex-lawmaker killed after family paid ransom

The family of 84-year-old Chief Abbot Ogbobula has been enveloped in grief since the day it learnt about the death of the former lawmaker, who was abducted by a six-man gang of kidnappers on June 26, from his home at Ihuba village in Ahoada, Rivers State.

The distraught daughter of the victim, Gift Ogbobula, who narrated what happened on the day of the abduction said: "My father, Chief Abbot Ogbobula, was kidnapped about 9:30a.m. The gang blocked the gate of the house. One of the kidnappers shot the tyre of the car and also broke the windscreen and kidnapped my father. We immediately reported the abduction at Ahoada Police State."

Having successfully escaped with the victim, they demanded a ransom of N20 million from the family. The relatives first sent the sum of N200,000 to the kidnappers.

The Commissioner of Police, Rivers State Command, Mr. Ahmed Zaki told *Sunday Sun*that the family later sent additional N500,000 to the gang. In a horrific twist of fate, a young member of the extended family, Udoma Njoku, sent to deliver the money was abducted and beheaded by the gang. His phone was also taken.

Probably dissatisfied with the amount they got when compared with the ransom demanded, the heartless gang murdered the octogenarian and buried him in a shallow grave in Degema creek, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Believing that it was all over, members of the gang went their separate ways, but providence was still monitoring them. Following a report by the family, the police command activated the operatives of the Anti-Kidnapping Squad headed by Supol Edward Shadare.

Through good detective work, Shadare and his men obtained useful information that led to the arrest of members of the gang on September 17, namely, Boma Thompson, 25, Chief Emenike Mathias, 47, Goodnews Nwoka, 33, Daniel ThankGod, 27, and Franklin Dokubo.

The police commissioner explained that one of the arrested suspects, Chief Emenike Mathias, allegedly arranged the abduction of the octogenarian because of chieftaincy issue in the community.

In the course of interrogation of the suspects, one of them, Daniel ThankGod revealed information about what happened. On September 27, he took the police to the place where the octogenarian was buried at Degema creek. The decomposing body was exhumed and deposited at University of Port Harcourt Mortuary.

Gift thanked the officers and men of the police command and expressed confidence in police commissioner, who she said had demonstrated professionalism in handling the case.

In a brief chat with *Sunday Sun* at the headquarters of the command, where the arrested members of the gang are being held while investigation continues, one of the suspects, Daniel ThankGod said: "It was Chief Emenike Mathias who brought the job that we should kidnap Chief Abbot Ogbobula. He told us that he had a conflict with Chief Abbot Ogbobula over chieftaincy title. So we kidnapped him on June 26, 2017 and took him to our hideout in Degema creek.

"We demanded N20 million naira and the family of the victim brought N200,000 and the second time, they brought N500,000 and a member of our gang, Ndidi, killed the boy who brought the money. I was the one who fed Ogbobula with Semovita, Lucozade and tea. It was one of our gang members, Boma Thompson that bought the food items in the market. One of our members shot Abbot Ogbobula. He spent six days in our custody before he died."

ThankGod who hails from Buguma Local Government Area, Rivers State added: "Chief Emenike Mathias refused to pay us for the job we did for him and would not take our calls. So we sent him a text message that we would tell the children of Chief Abbot Ogbobula that he was responsible for the kidnapping. That was when Emenike sent us recharge card, to beg for pardon."

The police commissioner said that Emenike, Thompson and Goodness have been charged to court and remanded in prison while Daniel Thank-God would soon be charged to court after the conclusion of investigation.