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More.bodies recovered from Benue Mass graves

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The number of dead bodies that have so far been exhumed from shallow graves identified at Gbatse, Ushongo Local Government Area (LGA) of Benue state has risen to 11.

Daily Sun had reported that some kidnap suspects were discovered to be in the habit of killing their victims and burying them in shallow graves after collecting ransom from their families.

As at Thursday, seven suspects including the leader of the gang, Iorwuese Kpila were said to have been arrested in connection with the gruesome killings.

Other suspects arrested in connection with the incident include Tersoo Agee, Agabi Charles, Chiahemen Baa and Ortema alias '10 tyres'.

Governor Samuel Ortom who paid an on the spot visit to the scene of the incident at the foot of Ushongo hills said that four members of the gang were at large and may currently be on the run.

He said there is every likelihood that more bodies may be recovered at the end of the exercise.

The Governor who disclosed that the corpses of those that were identified have been handed over to their families for proper burial said the abductors may have killed the suspects to get rich through the back door.

Corroborating the Governor's claim, some of the locals said that the motive behind the killings may be quest by the suspects to acquire spiritual powers.

The Governor also stated that government was collaborating with security agencies in the state to commence a clampdown on criminal elements in Katsina-Ala, Ushongo, Ukum, Kwande, Logo and Vandeikya Local government areas of the state.

Governor Ortom lamented the situation where criminal elements take the lives of others at will and even go to the extent of killing their victims, despite collecting ransom from families of the victims.

Narrating how the bubble burst in the suspected kidnappers, Chairman, Ushongo LGA, Bensen Agugu told newsmen that the District Head of Mbagwaza, Chief Julius Kpenkpen recently called his Mbayegh counterpart, Chief Nathaniel Hoyo and informed him that two of his subjects engaged the services of two commercial motorcyclists commonly known as okada riders from Mbagwaza and after several days, no one has heard from them. Based in the information, the District Head of Mbayegh called a meeting of leaders of the two communities and demanded that the family of one of the suspects, Iorwuese Kpila (the ring leader) produced him."

The Chairman stated that when Kpila finally showed up, he was arrested and handed over to the police, adding that it was in the course of investigations that it was established that he was one of the culprits and further investigation led to the arrest of six other of his accomplices.

Tue council boss who disclosed that the suspects have confessed to the killings recommended that they should be hanged to serve as a deterrent to others.

Meanwhile, our correspondent gathered that the prime suspect, Kpila had also documented the names, ages, as well as the home towns of most of his victims.

The victims include, 21 years old Aondowase Akaahar, from Mbarumun, Nanev, Kwande LGA; Terlumun Tema, from Shangev-Ya, Kwande LGA; 26 years old Ushahemba Ulugh, from Mbakyaa, Shangev-ya, Kwande LGA; 20 years old Avakaa Adema, from Tse Akanyi-Mbarumun, Nanev Kwande LGA; 21 years old Tughgba Akosu, from Mbakuha-Abenga, Nanev, Kwande LGA and 28 years old Ushahemba Adasu, from Mbagbera, Vandeikya LGA.

Others are Aondohemba Kunav, 39 years old; Terkaa Wanshila, 25 years old from Mbarumun-Nanev, Kwande LGA; Iorhemba Temase Asongo from Tse Jev-Mbangor, Shangev-Ya, Kwande LGA; Terfa Ati, 19 years old, from Mbagwaza, Ushongo LGA and "Tyokula Ankyo-from Mbagwaza, Ushongo LGA.

The Police Commissioner, CP Mukkadas Garbage is billed to brief newsmen on the matter on Friday.

