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## I killed 16 persons to acquire wealth, mystical power – Benue serial killer

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The leader of a kidnap gang paraded by Benue State Police Command on Friday made shocking confessions of ritual killings to acquire mystical power. The gang of six was arrested in connection with the abduction and killing of 16 persons in Ushongo Local Government Area of Benue State.

The kingpin, Iorwuese Ikpila alias Dr Kwagh-a-korum menenge (meaning “let something catch me, let me see”) claimed the aspiration to acquire more power and become influential than his late native doctor father, was what drove him and his gang into kidnapping and

killing spree in order to get blood as requested by a certain spirit, whom he referred to as “the queen.”

“We needed the power to acquire anything we wanted and the queen asked us to bring 20 people so that she can use their blood. We have only gotten 16 when we were arrested,” he confessed.

Policemen arrested Ikpila and his gang on September 21, after weeks of intelligence gathering, following incessant complains about a kidnap gang operating within Ushongo Local Government Area of the State.



Benue State Commissioner of Police, Garba Mukaddas while briefing newsmen stated: “The gang kidnapped 16 persons, robbed them of their vehicles, motorcycles and other belongings, then killed them, buried their corpses and planted cassava on the graves as a way of covering up the crime.”

The suspects, according to Police Commissioner Mukaddas, also confessed that they had begun operation as a robbery gang within Ukum, Kwande, Kastina-Ala and Ushongo local government areas of the state, but had to resort to kidnapping as a result of the tight deployment of security operatives on the highways in the state.

The police boss further confirmed that 11 corpses of the victims have so far been exhumed and identified by their family members. The receiver of the property stolen by the gang, one Shizoon Nyityo of Zaki Biam, has also been arrested.

Ikpila, however, did not appear remorseful about his actions.

“Nothing pass God. I have confessed when I was arrested before; I took them to where I buried them. I regret my actions,” he said.

Items recovered from the gang included one locally-made single-barrel gun, a rope used for strangulating victims and assorted charms.

It was a week of a breakthrough for the Benue State Police Command as they netted a haul of 40 persons in connection with armed robbery and kidnapping in a six-day operation from September 21 to 27.

Various weapons, including 21 arms, 17 live ammunition and 12 cartridges were recovered from the suspects.

Mukaddas, who noted that the briefing was organised to keep the public abreast of the activities of the Command, affirmed that eight kidnap/robbery cases had been charged to court after investigations.

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