

Evil brothers

• Details of criminal exploits of two siblings, 20 and 27 years old, in Edo state

18th April 2020 in **Features** 0

0 **184**
SHARES VIEWS

Share on Facebook

Share on Twitter

Ngozi Uwujare

Two brothers nabbed by Anti-Kidnapping Squad of the Edo State Police Command are to be arraigned for an array of crimes that include kidnapping, armed robbery and murder. Endurance Aikhue, 27, and his younger brother, Elijah, 20, both of whom are ex-convicts and members of deadly cult groups are alleged to have perpetrated the kidnapping and killing of two female victims, Faith Esekhabona, 19, a first-year student of the Federal Polytechnic Auchi, and Faith Ojemire, 22, a final year Nursing student of Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma.

The brothers, who operated a kidnap-and-kill modus operandi, are alleged to have killed their victims in their hideout somewhere in Benin City. Faith Esekhabona was kidnapped on November 23, 2019, from her hostel in Auchi while Faith Ojemire was abducted on December 8, at Ekpoma. Their abductors allegedly took the hostages to their hideout in Benin City from where they made contact with their families for ransom.

The criminal activities of the Aikhu brothers came to the notice of the police on December 13, 2019, when the father of one of the victims, retired DSP Joseph Esekhabona reported to the Anti-Kidnapping Unit that his kidnapped daughter had not been freed even after he paid the ransom demanded.

The Anti-Kidnapping operatives subsequently launched an offensive on January 11, 2020 that culminated in the arrest of the two brothers responsible for the abduction in Benin City. They were caught in the process of abducting another female victim from the University of Benin. The smartphone of Faith Ojemire, one of their earlier victims, was recovered from them.

How they operate

Once in police net, detectives dug into their past and it turned out the Aikhue brothers both had criminal records. According to the Edo State Commissioner of Police, Mr Lawan Jimeta, “Endurance and Elijah Aikhue have both committed a crime earlier. They were arrested for cultism, armed robbery and unlawful possession of firearms and were remanded in Auchi prison.”

The two suspects reportedly jumped bail and fled the country. While Endurance absconded to Dubai, his younger brother Elijah hightailed it out of Nigeria to hide in Ghana. They both returned to the country in 2019 and relocated to Auchi while using Benin City as their hideout.

Furthermore, both brothers belonged to secret cults. While Endurance is a member of Neo-Black Movement of Africa, Elijah is a member of Eiye cult. While explaining to detectives how they conducted their abduction, Endurance told detectives he used military uniform to avoid any suspicion on the part of their targets.

Commissioner of Police Jimeta disclosed that the brothers took possession of Faith Esekhabona’s UBA ATM card, turning the victim’s bank account into their business account, as they started using it to collect money from other families, starting with the victim’s family whom they instructed to pay N500, 000 ransom into their daughter’s UBA account.

Saturday Sun spoke briefly with the brothers who hail from Owan West Local Government Area of Edo State. “Since I came back from Dubai, I had been involved in the abduction and murder of two female students. We demanded a ransom of N200,000 and N500,000 from their families. We have abandoned their corpses,” Endurance Aikhu attested.

He added: “I am a member of the Neo-Black Movement of Africa. I am a graduate of Federal Polytechnic Auchi. I studied Business Administration and graduated in 2014, but I didn’t participate in the NYSC scheme.”

Elijah, on the other hand, claimed he was simply following his elder brother’s instruction. A phone belonging to Faith Ojemire, one of their victims, was recovered from him. “It was what we used to complete transaction into her ATM card,” he confessed. Also recovered from him was their mother’s phone number which they used to demand a ransom of N500, 000 from the family of Ojemire.

“I didn’t know where the corpses of the two students are,” Elijah claimed.

Saturday Sun also spoke with families of the victims. Joseph Esekhangbona summarized his ordeal: “My daughter, Faith Esekhangbona was kidnapped since November 23, 2019. The kidnappers called and demanded millions of naira as ransom. I sent them N200, 000. I thought they would release my daughter to me. When I waited and I didn’t hear from them and my daughter was not released, I went to the Anti-Kidnapping Squad of the Edo State Police Command on December 13, 2019.”

The mother of the second victim, Mrs Ojemire, also recounted her ordeal: “They kidnapped my daughter who is a final year Nursing student since December 8, 2019. They used her phone to withdraw her money and they demanded N500, 000 ransom. We didn’t pay the ransom.”

Both parents expressed their agonies over what became of their daughters.

“I don’t know now whether my daughter is alive or dead,” wailed Mrs Ojemire while Esekhangbona simply pleaded: “If my daughter is dead, then they should let me see her corpse.”

According to Commissioner of Police Jimeta, the suspects are yet to disclose where the bodies are abandoned. “As soon as investigations are concluded they will be taken to court,” he said.