

From TONY JOHN, Port Harcourt

The king that never returned

THE decomposed body of the kidnapped traditional ruler of Luwa Community in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State, Chief Robert N. Loolo, has been found by the Rivers State Police Command. It was a tearful and gory sight.

Saturday Sun gathered that Late Chief Loolo was kidnapped in June, 2019, at his palace at about 8:50 pm. At the time, he was 61 years old.

The decomposed body was recovered on Monday, October 25 by a team of policemen and some members of the community.

The Divisional Police Officer (DPO) in charge of the Bori Division, Bako Angbashim, a Superintendent of Police (SP), led the team to a thick creek linking Luwa, Bera and Bani communities in Khana LGA. That was where the body was exhumed.

Angbashim said the discovery followed a thorough investigation and random search in various forests within the area.

He recalled: Two years back, the paramount ruler of Luwa community was kidnapped by hoodlums. All the efforts to trace his whereabouts proved abortive. And, today, God helped us, and we were able to trace it to a thick creek.

"As you can see, it is a difficult terrain. Nobody can reach that place. They took him there. We saw two sticks where they tied him. That means, they, the kidnappers tied him. No help, no food, no water. And he died.

"We have been searching for where we could see his bones. We thank God we were able to find them today. It is a very difficult terrain. No human being can reach this place."

The DPO, who advised kidnappers and those behind criminal activities to vacate Ogoniland, further said his men would stop at nothing in ensuring that the perpetrators were arrested.

He warned: "Boys should repent. The kidnappers should repent because their action is wickedness to humanity. You imagine a royal father like this, you carried him and tied him in a thick creek where he could not get any help.

"This is wickedness to humanity and those boys behind this nefarious act should repent."

Meanwhile, the children of the late king, who went with the police team to the creeks, said they were traumatised over the kidnap and discovery of their father's corpse.

They, however, lauded the gallantry of DPO Angbashim and his men for the concerted efforts they had made to trace where the perpetrators tied him and left him to die and rot.

The deceased's first son, Kingdom Loolo, said that since the abduction of his late father two years ago, the family had been searching for him, regretting that there had been no trace of his whereabouts until now.

"But very fortunately, God has helped us to locate and recover the decomposed corpse through the help of the Bori DPO."

"The family is very happy at the discovery and recovery. We are happy that we have seen his corpse, even though, the family had been in deep pain.

"He was the family's breadwinner and he embarked on several projects before he was kidnapped.

Also, Dr. Douglas Fabeke, one of his sons, said it was heartbreaking that their father was killed or left to die, even after they had paid ransom to the kidnappers.

Fabeke, who is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Ogoni Liberation Initiative (OLI), disclosed that the family had paid ransom twice to the perpetrators of the dastardly act in the hope that the late traditional ruler would be released.

According to him, some young people in the area, who were fighting for the position of youth president, were behind the heinous act.

He stated: "Today, we thank God. We have been able to discover where Chief R.O. Loolo, the Paramount Ruler of Luwa community was buried.



MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY AT THE POLICE STATION AFTER THE BODY WAS FOUND

- Two years after abduction, family recovers decomposed body of monarch
- It's heartbreaking he was killed after kidnappers collected ransom twice, son laments



POLICE OFFICERS AND COMMUNITY YOUTHS DURING THE SEARCH



SOME MEMBERS OF THE SEARCH PARTY AFTER THE RECOVERY OF THE MONARCH'S BODY

"He was kidnapped right from his house by some youth groups in the community, who were fighting to be youth president.

"When the incident happened to a peaceful man like that, we tried to beg the youths to release him for us, to an extent that we had to pay ransom twice. We also reported the matter to the police immediately the incident happened.

"All the security agencies in the state got involved in making sure that the man was released. After some time, there was si-

lence. And we went into more action. Then after a few months, we were able to arrest the native doctor who confessed that the man had been killed, but he was not aware of where the man was buried.

"And since that time, we had been on this issue. But two months ago, we renewed efforts through intelligence gathering to make sure we locate where he was buried.

"And by the grace of God, today, we have been able to mobilise force from Bori Police Divisional headquarters and Area



THE LATE MONARCH

Command. A combined team stormed the forest and with the help of some boys, we were able to discover where the man was buried. Everything about him was there.

"He was tortured and tied to a tree. But I thank God that at the end of this thing, the head of this man has been taken back home and has been deposited in the mortuary.

"We shall continue the matter and take permission from the police for a proper burial as a king."

He also expressed appreciation to the Bori DPO, Bako, for mobilising his men with extraordinary operation for the onerous task.

"Today, I am happy that the head of my father has been taken back home. The matter in court will continue. We want the law to take its course and want all the people who were involved in this crime not to go unpunished."

Also speaking, another of the monarch's sons, Eric Loolo, expressed mixed feelings, saying that, although it was a painful experience to lose a beloved one, he was happy his father's corpse had finally been recovered.

Eric said: "The gallant DPO led the team to a thick forest linking Luwa community and Bera and Bani communities and we were able to recover the corpse. We saw the stick that they used in tying him, the boxers and everything he wore on the day of the incident.

"We the family members are happy. At least, we have seen the corpse, although right now, we are in deep pain because he was our father and he had been missing for over two years.

"We appreciate the police, we appreciate everyone who came with us; our community youths that were supporting us. And today, this has become a reality."