

Suspected ritual killers meet Waterloo in Kwara

Why we abducted monarch's daughters, others

FROM NGOZI UWUJARE

THE Tactical Team of the Kwara State Police Command has arrested two suspected ritualists, armed robbers and kidnapers who the police say have been terrorising the area for some time, kidnapping people for blood money rituals.

The police said the arrested suspects have kidnapped over 15 victims for money rituals. Among their victims are the twin girls of a traditional ruler, the Owolobo of Obbo Ayegunle in Ekiti Local Government Area of Kwara State.

The team has also rescued 10 victims from the kidnapers' den in Ejiu, Obbo, Ile and Osi Forest in Kwara South Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Also in the same gang is a 38-year-old man, one Alade James of Alawe Compound, Offa who reportedly kidnapped a nine-year-old, Faith Samuel of Onireke Area, Offa alongside his syndicate members and killed the victim for ritual.

In the process of burying the corpse at Ikotun Area of Offa, the Kwara State Police Tactical Team arrested him.

The Kwara State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Emienbo Tuesday Assayomo told *Saturday Star* that the suspected criminals are armed robbers and kidnapers who are involved in rituals. He said they kidnapped victims and used them for rituals.

According to him, the Police Tactical Team, in conjunction with the vigilante groups and local hunters, had a serious encounter with the suspects. He said the operatives, vigilantes and hunters raided all the hideouts of the kidnapers on April 17, 2022 in Obbo, Eruka and Osi forest in Kwara South Local Government Area of Kwara State.

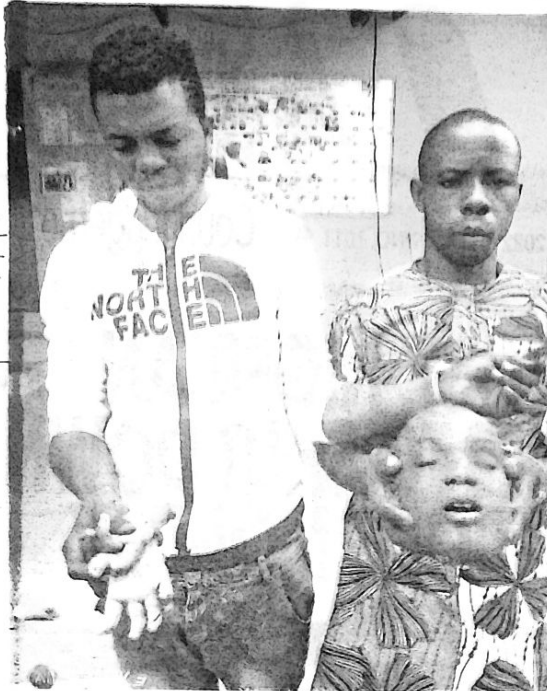
CP Assayomo said that the same gang on March 29, 2022 kidnapped three victims and took them to their Osi forest for rituals.

"The information got to us," he said. "The Police Tactical Team, vigilante group and local hunters had an exchange of fire with the kidnapers and three victims were rescued in their hideout while the kidnapers were neutralised and others escaped with gunshot injuries. One of the neutralised kidnapers was identified as Dogo who has been on the wanted list of the police for the killing of one Femi Afolayan for failure to pay ransom in February 2022.

"Also, my men recovered one cut-to-size locally made pistol, one locally made gun, four cutlasses, a bunch of criminal charms and six expended cartridges from the hideouts.

"On September 24, 2021, the same gang had kidnapped two victims, one Kafayat Jamui, 25, and Lawal Seri, of Olupo Farm Settlement, Eruka, Ekiti Local Government Area of Kwara State. The victims were sleeping in their room when the criminals abducted them for rituals. The command tactical team, in conjunction with local hunters and vigilantes, searched the bushes and rescued the victims while two kidnap suspects were arrested. We recovered one local fabricated assault rifle with four AK47 live ammunition," he said.

He further said that on October



TWO OF THE SUSPECTS

14, 2021, the same gang kidnapped a twin girl of Oba Samuel Adedun, the Owolobo of Obbo Ayegunle in Ekiti Local Government Area of Kwara State. The political tactical team, in collaboration with the vigilante groups and local hunters of the area and the monarch, Owolobo swung into action and gave the kidnapers a hot chase. The kidnapers abandoned the two victims and escaped into their bush.

He said a member of the same gang of kidnapers' syndicate, 40-year-old Sola Akinoyemi was arrested on March 17, 2022 by the policemen of Kulende Divisional Police headquarters, Ilorin for being a suspected ritualist.

He said one of their syndicate gang member who was found with a black Jeep zoomed off immediately he noticed the presence of the police.

"The suspect escaped during the chase of arrest and we recovered school uniforms, note books, text books and different money denominations totalling N166,000.

"On April 2, 2022, the same gang kidnapped two victims in the Obbo and Isapa axis. The kidnapers took the victims to their hideout in Osi forest and demanded a ransom of N2 million from the victims' relatives and threatened to kill their victims if the ransom was not paid", Assayomo said.

One of the victims, Isiaka Awoyemi narrated his story to *Saturday Star*. His words: "I hail from Kwara State. I am a trader and I was kidnapped on January 19, 2022. I was taken to the bush where they wanted to kill me. In their forest, I saw a lifeless body and another human body that had been beheaded. I was crying for help for them to release me from their custody, but they were demanding the sum of N2 million ransom from my family. There were five victims in the custody of the kidnapers. They kidnapped and killed their victims for blood money rituals.

"But it was when we heard a sudden blast of gunshots from the forest



CP ASSAYOMO

and I saw the kidnapers running away from the bush that I knew that something was happening and that maybe help was coming for us. They ran away and abandoned us in the bush. It was there and then that we started shouting for help before the police operatives identified our location and we were rescued from the bush. We stayed four days in the kidnapers' captivity. It was Allah who sent the police to rescue us," he said.

Another victim, Abdulahi Fatai said: "I am from Ekiti Local Government Area of Kwara State. I am a farmer. Kidnapping was so rampant in Ekuku and Isapa axis. They have been kidnapping and killing victims for months and they would use the victims for rituals. We have been in the bondage of the kidnapers since more than two years ago. A lot of people have gone missing - both the old and the young. Some were kidnapped when going to the farm or attacked during day time. We have been crying to the governor of Kwara State over the kidnapping and killing of victims for rituals. We have to rely on our local hunters and vigilante groups. The police division can only do little.

"It was when they kidnapped the twin girls of Oba Samuel Adedun, the Owolobo of Obbo Ayegunle in Ekiti L.G.A that the police tactical team, the vigilante group and local



ANOTHER SUSPECTED RITUALIST

hunters were mobilised, and they rescued the two twin girls. They fought the kidnapers and some of them were shot dead. Since then, we have had peace in our community. The kidnapers abandoned our community which they used as kidnapping dens. Today, the security agencies have come again to raid their hideout.

"When I was kidnapped in February 2022 within the same day, I was rescued by the police tactical team, the vigilante group and local hunters. It was like a miracle on my side. The Ekutu, Isapa axis is now a peaceful axis. We don't want the security agencies to abandon us. We need their presence."

The suspect, Alade James, in a chat, spoke with the reporter. Said he: "I hail from Kwara State. I am a member of an armed robbery and kidnapping group. I have been involved in kidnapping and we would use the victims for rituals. I have used three victims for rituals before the police operatives arrested me. I have been involved in several kidnapping and killing victims for money rituals. I would bury the corpses of victims and look for a buyer to buy the human parts.

"We have over 10 gang members who are involved in armed robbery and kidnapping. We sell human parts for N100,000. Once we kidnap a victim, we don't kill them

immediately. We wait for ransom from the relatives of victims, but we would still murder the victims for money rituals. Since I was arrested by the police operatives, I have taken them to where I buried the human parts which were recovered from my other gang members who have absconded," he said.

Another member of the syndicate was arrested on April 24, 2022 when the policemen attached to "Operation Harmony," while on patrol of Okeoyi/Jebba Road, intercepted two men on a motorcycle. They attempted to evade the officers on stop and search duty and their action aroused the suspicion of the operatives.

The two suspects were given a hot chase and they were forced to stop. After a search was conducted on them, a bag containing a fresh human head and hands were found in their possession. The two suspects were Wasiu Omonose, 35, and Akanbi Ibrahim, 32, of Abioye compound. They confessed to be taking the fresh human head and hands to an Alfa in Ilorin for ritual purposes.

CP Assayomo stated that the command would not fold its arms and allow criminals of whatever nomenclature to truncate the peace and harmony presently existing in Kwara State.

He said all the arrested suspects would soon be charged to court.