

3 suspects killed in foiled kidnap in Delta

From **Paul Osuyi**, Asaba

THREE suspected members of a five-man kidnap gang have been shot dead at the Umunede axis of the Benin-Asaba-Onitsha Highway, in Delta State.

The suspects sustained severe injuries during a fierce exchange with operatives of the state police command's Rapid Response Squad, while on undercover anti-crime patrol along the highway.

Confirming the incident yesterday, in Asaba, the Public Relations Officer of the command, DSP Bright Edafe, said the hoodlums emerged from

the bush with the intention to rob and kidnap the occupants of the vehicle, but unknown to them, they were undercover police operatives.

Edafe said the hoodlums fired gunshots, adding that "the team smartly disembarked from the vehicle and returned fire. The armed hoodlums, on realising that their potential victims were policemen, ran into the bush.

"The team went into a fierce gun duel with the hoodlums during which three members of the gang were fatally wounded and one fabricated revolver pistol, six 7.62mm live ammunition, four expended

7.62mm ammunition were recovered from them.

"The injured hoodlums were taken to the hospital, but died while receiving treatment. Manhunt for the fleeing members of the gang is ongoing."

Edafe, also, confirmed the arrest of a 48-year-old suspect, Suleiman Musa, during a raid of a criminal hideout, along Mariam Babangida Way in Asaba.

He said 540 rounds of live cartridges, three Elepac generators, one solar light, one singer sewing machine, two television sets and one Lifan motorcycle were recovered.