



THE SUSPECTS

# Police, vigilantes make life hellish for Benue criminals

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A joint operation by men of Benue State Police Command and vigilantes has led to the arrest of two suspected cultists who are also reportedly into armed robbery and kidnapping.

David Nasiru, a 22-year-old ex-convict and Hassan Usman, 22, were said to belong to a syndicate with six other gang members who were allegedly involved in the killing of over 15 victims. They were also said to have kidnapped 25 victims and collected millions of naira as ransom within the Wadata Area Council Community in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State.

The Benue State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Wale Abass told *Saturday Sun* that the two suspected killers and members of Red Skin Confraternity Cult, David Nasiru and Hassan Usman had been jailed at the Makurdi Prison two times for armed robbery, murder and kidnapping and released in 2020. They reportedly formed another gang with over 30 gang members.

He said the two suspected criminals had terrorised Wadata Community, killed, robbed and kidnapped victims who were taken to their hideout in Wadata. He said the entire Wadata Community was under siege by these bandits in their environs.

CP Abass said that the entire Wadata community has been crying for help and seeking freedom from the hands of the hoodlums.

He said: "They wrote a petition to me that they have been in bondage for three years. I then ordered a joint operation of the Police 'A' Division and the Denda JTF which was led by Commander Supol Justin Gberindyor. They stormed the hideouts of the criminals on Wadata Axis and arrested the two suspects – Dauda Nasiru and Usman Hassan as well as six gang members on March 2, 2022. The operatives raided all the hideouts and combed all the forest to flush out the criminals".

CP Abass said the ex-convict Dauda Nasiru was a notorious criminal who had killed several innocent victims.

"He kidnapped two suspects in March 2020 with his syndicates and collected some millions of naira from the victim's family. In October 2020, the same Dauda Nasiru with his gang had a clash with another Black Beret Confraternity where

Nasiru Dauda and Hassan Usman killed several cult members. Immediately afterwards, they fled to Port-Harcourt, Rivers State to hide.

"In December 2020, the same gang of Dauda Nasiru shot sporadically in Wadata community and robbed several victims of their valuable items from house to house. They vandalised some property of the innocent victims. Some of the victims who refused to cooperate with them were shot dead and they dumped their corpses in the river. The case was reported to 'A' Division. The policemen stormed the scene and Dauda Nasiru and his gang escaped from the scene of crime," he said.

CP Abass further said that in February 2021, Nasiru Dauda and his syndicate kidnapped four victims in Makurdi and took them to their hideout and collected N300,000 as ransom before they were released. The ransom, it was gathered, was paid by the victim's relatives after the victims had spent three days in their custody. The case was reported at the police "A" Division. The policemen from "A" Division stormed the scene and assisted in the rescue of the victims to hospital for medical treatment.

"The same gang in April 2021 robbed some victims who were going to their farms in Agata in Apa Local Government Area of Benue State. Members of "Operation Denda" with their operatives also went to the forest and had an encounter with the hoodlums. In the process, the criminals abandoned their arms, ammunition, including pump action guns, AK47 rifles, 20 rounds of 9mm ammunition while other gang members escaped with bullet wounds. The operatives rescued the three victims from the hands of the hoodlums who have been terrorizing the entire Agata community. Members of the vigilance group have started combing the hideout and having patrols with the policemen on joint patrol to make sure that the hoodlums are flushed out of the state," the police boss said.

CP Abass said that the same gang attacked victims in Adoka Local Government Area. They collected their phones and wanted to rape the victims until they were intercepted by the police operatives who had an encounter with the criminals, he stated. He said the suspects escaped

with bullet wounds and abandoned their AK47 rifles, pump action and Dane gun, including 40 rounds of cartridges from them.

He said the gang has been involved in murder cases and armed robbery during clashes by cult members within Wadata community.

"They robbed victims of their valuable items and murdered them. There were clashes involving members of the Axe Confraternity and Eiye Confraternity and they murdered over seven victims during the clashes. The suspects escaped from the scene, and the command declared them wanted. The police operatives have raided their hideout where the hoodlums abandoned their dens and we recovered AK47, pump action, dane guns and 20 cartridges, and charms, among others," he said.

One of the suspects, David Nasiru told *Saturday Sun*: "I hail from Benue State. I lead a five-member gang of armed robbers and kidnapers who are terrorising the state. We have murdered over 10 victims whom we kidnapped for three days when ransom was not paid. We have had different rivalries with other cult members. We have been involved in killing of many people at Wadata Council Community. Whenever we were involved in a murder case, we would escape and run to Abuja. After the area had become calm, we would return to Benue State."

"I am a member of the Red Skin Confraternity cult. I am an ex-convict. I went to Makurdi Prison twice for armed robbery and kidnapping before I was released in 2020. When I was released, I formed a group with a co ex-convict, Hassan Usman where we formed another gang. It was when we were involved in killing and robbing victims before the police JTF personnel arrested us on April 13, 2022 and recovered arms and ammunitions from us. I am in charge of the Armoury which we used for our operation," he said.

Another suspect, Hassan Usman told the reporter: "I hail from Nasarawa State. We have been involved in several kidnapping and armed robberies in Wadata Council Community. I am an ex-convict and went to Makurdi Prison yard before I was released in 2020. We have had several encounters with the policemen and we do escape into our hideouts in the forest. We

were arrested during an encounter with the police personnel and I have confessed to the policemen," he stated.

One of the victims, a vigilante personnel, Mr. Dogo Joseph also spoke with *Saturday Sun*. His words: "The Wadata Council Community had been under siege for over three years. They killed and kidnapped innocent people, and would then wait to collect ransom for victims. Once they collected the ransom, they would still kill the kidnapped victims. I am a vigilante member. I have encountered them when we chased them inside their forest."

"They have attacked me several times in my house since they have identified me as a vigilante. They wanted to kidnap one of my children. We intercepted them and one hit me with a cutlass when they came to attack me the second time. I overcame them and chased them away."

"I reported the case to the police at the 'A' Division over their attempt to rob and kidnap me. With the help of the Police Tactical Team, "Operation Denda" and my vigilante group, we raided the hideouts and arrested the two ex-convicts and other four gang members of their syndicate. And when we interrogated them, they have confessed to the policemen," he said.

Another victim, Samuel Audu said: "I hail from Benue State. I am a businessman. I was kidnapped in Makurdi and they took me to their camp in the forest where they demanded N2 million. My relatives were threatened by the kidnappers to send them money. They had to send them N500,000 and they reported the case at "A" Division in Makurdi. But before the police operatives would swing into action, the kidnappers had released me. I saw drama and hell from them."

"I spent three days in their custody and they used a cutlass to beat me up. I was pleading with them to spare my life. They were threatening to kill me if my family members refused to send the money to them. I was very happy that the police operatives raided their hideouts and arrested the suspects."

"We want Justice, and we don't want to see their faces in our community again," he said.

The Police Commissioner, Abass, assured that the suspects would soon be charged to court.