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## Kidnap: Hypertensive victim, 76, dies after rescue operation

Detectives attached to the Inspector-General of Police, Special Intelligence Response Team (IRT) have arrested six suspected kidnappers and rescued their 76-year-old hypertensive victim, Benjamin Okoye, in Abia State.

However, the victim, who was rescued on December 12 after the IRT men smashed the kidnapping gang and grabbed six suspects, died later.

Items recovered from the suspects are two AK47 rifles and six magazines loaded with 180 rounds of live ammunition, all hidden in a special compartment constructed under the operational car of the kidnappers.

The suspects' arrest and Okoye's rescue followed the victim's abduction on December 15 in Abia State and subsequent demand of N80 million ransom by the kidnappers. On December 18, IRT operatives were drafted into the case.

The victim was a major importer and a businessman in Aba but said to be an indigene of Anambra State.

A police source said: "The IRT operatives were instructed by the IG, Ibrahim Idris, to take over the case. The detectives immediately swung into action and eventually arrested two of the kidnappers in Aba town. The suspects took combined team of IRT operatives and policemen from Abia State Police Command to the kidnappers' camp at Okpukwu Umuobo area of Aba

town. The camp is a three-bedroom house, rented and used for camping abducted victims. The operatives raided the camp and rescued the ailing Okoye. He is a hypertensive patient that had been held captive with his medicine. He was rescued and four other kidnappers were arrested at the camp. These four suspects challenged the police teams to a gun battle, leading to them sustaining bullet wounds."

The suspects, who are presently in police custody, are Chinonye Anoro (26) and Prince Sylvester 35, owner and driver of the operational bus. The bus had been used for eight operations in Aba.

Others are Kingsley Papa (45), Ugbonabo Danjuma (43), who is the gang leader, Moses Clever (31) and Ogoro James (26).

The state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Anthony Ogbizi, yesterday announced that Okoye later died after

being rescued.

Parading the suspects, Ogbizi announced that he got a report that the victim had just died.

He asked the suspects: "Now that your victim has died, what have you gained? The suspects were

engaged in a gun battle by a combined team of IRT operatives, right in the bungalow of the suspects. The bungalow is located at the World Bank Housing Estate in Aba. The IRT operatives had smashed many crimes and are be-

abduct them.

One of the suspects with gunshot wound, Sylvester, said: "I'm not a member of the kidnappers. But they used to take my mini bus to carry out their operations. Each time they used the bus, they give me some money.

hind this present success. During the gun battle, no life was lost. It was an excellent job. The rule of engagement was strictly observed."

Ogbizi said that it was difficult for the gang and other criminals to escape because of the security network built in the state. He said that the method now adopted by the criminals was to tail prospective victims to their homes, using tricycle, after which they would

The gang has used my bus twice and gave me N400,000. I protested that they should not use the bus again. I used the money to pay off debts."

Anoro said he was in his shop when one of the suspects, Sylvester, came and told him that there was somebody they wanted to carry. He said that he drove the bus to pick the victim when he and others were arrested.

The leader of the gang, Sylvester, has been identified as a shop owner at the popular Eziukwu Cemetery Market in Aba. He is the information source of the gang.

The hoodlums, who were said to have kidnapped the importer's son not too long ago, still went back to kidnap the importer with the sole aim of extracting more money from him. It was learnt that the hoodlums on sighting the police engaged them in a gun duel and were later overpowered by the police team.



Some of the suspects

## DPR seals 30 filling stations in Ogun, Akwa Ibom, Borno

Kunle Olayeni,  
Tony Anlochebe and  
Taiwo Jimoh

Lingering petrol scarcity took its toll on residents of major towns in parts of the country yesterday as many filling stations shut their gates against motorists.

In Abeokuta, the Ogun State capital, many of the petrol stations apparently hoarded Premium Motor Spirit (PMS)

while those who dispensed the product only sold it for a few hours.

It was learnt that several commuters and motorists were stranded as a result of the development even as law enforcement operatives intensified efforts to address the situation.

Responding to the biting effects of fuel scarcity, the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) sealed 30 filling station in Ogun, Akwa Ibom and Borno states.

The department said it sealed two filling stations in Abeokuta for alleged hoard-

ing and under-dispensing of petrol.

DPR also sealed 16 filling stations in Akwa Ibom State for selling petrol above N145 per litre.

The department also sealed 12 filling stations in Borno State for various offences.

DPR officials and operatives of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) sealed World Oil filling station at Ibara area of Abeokuta and shut a fuel pump inside MAAN IPC filling station at Ita-Eko area.

It was learnt that attendants at some filling stations were forced to sell fuel after discovering thousands of litres hoarded in their tanks.

The DPR Head of Operations, Abeokuta Field Office, Kasali Akinde, said the agencies carried out the



Police arraign Burna Boy