

Three suspected kidnappers shot dead in Kogi

Three suspected kidnappers have been shot dead in Kogi State during a shooting encounter with a combined team of soldiers, policemen and local hunters.

The state Police Command's Public Relations Officer, ASP William Aya, who confirmed this to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Lokoja on Saturday, said that two of the kidnappers also escaped with gunshot injuries.

Aya said that the five-man armed kidnappers had, on September 11, kidnapped six persons between Iyamoye and Ekinrinade road in Ijumu Local Government Area of the state.

The kidnappers, who were masked, were said to have, on the said day, kidnapped Chief Ganiyu Popoola, the Elemu Aran of Omu-Aran, his brother, Dr Sule Popoola, their nephew, a woman and her husband, said to be a medical doctor and an unidentified victim.

They were said to be travelling to Lokoja in their sepa-

rate vehicles when they and another commercial bus ran into a road block mounted by the suspects.

The driver of the commercial bus was, however, able to quickly manoeuvre his vehicle and escaped with a bullet-shattered windscreen towards Omuo-Oke, a border town between Ekiti and Kogi states.

The kidnappers, after robbing their victims, later marched them into the nearby thick forest.

Popoola, one of the victims, who spoke with NAN, said that the kidnappers took them to their hideouts where they were detained for hours before they released him, his brother and the only woman among them.

He said that they were given instructions to go and look for ransom to secure the release of others.

Before releasing them, Popoola, who spoke on the telephone, said that their captors took their phone numbers and returned their handsets to them.