

Juliana Francis

A suspected armed robber, Godwin Rafael, 32, has explained why he always goes to T-junctions at night to make sacrifices to god after killing people during operations.

Police said that Rafael's gang, which specialised in attacking Point of Sale, POS, operators, in Aba Town, Abia State, has killed three people, but the gang members, who are presently in police custody, admitted killing only two POS operators during operation.

The two are a man, identified as Dr Victor Chimaobi, killed along Market Road by Kent Street Aba, on January 21, 2021 and Miss Ezinne Grace Iroh, was robbed and killed on January 31, 2021, at Ukaegbu Street, in Ogbor Hill area of Aba.

According to Rafael, after both killings, he had gone to T-junctions at night to make a sacrifice to God, asking for forgiveness.

He said any time he promised God that he would stop robbery; he would find himself going for another operation.

He said: "The second operation was at Market Road by Kents in Aba. We robbed a POS operator, but this time it was a man. I shot him on the cheek because he pushed my gang member, Chibuike Sunday. We were five that went on that operation and I got N7000 as my share of the loot."

Rafael said when he heard that the victim died, he went to drop his share of the money

I sacrificed at T-Junctions after killings to atone for my sins –Suspect

at a T-junction and then prayed to God, asking Him for forgiveness.

He added: "I didn't know the operation would take his life. I dropped the money at that junction, hoping it would serve as atonement for my sins. I took a vow never to go for any robbery again. A few weeks later, my gang members and I went to visit a friend along Ukgwu Street in Ogbor Hill.

"One of our friends, Santiago, suggested we should rob a POS operator, who was on that same street. I objected because I'm well known in that area, but Santiago and Chibuike robbed and killed the lady. They collected the sum of N150,000. We were five that went for the operation.

"I got N23,000 as my share. When we got home, news came that the woman we robbed was dead. We all fought with Santiago for killing the woman. He told us that the woman struggled with him and she left him no choice than to shoot her.

"I used the money to travel out of Abia State. I went to Abuja, where I spent two weeks. I was arrested when I returned to Aba. I didn't know how the police got to know I was involved in the operation. I had no choice than to tell them all I know. I also assisted in

arresting six other members of our gang, including Abraham, our tricycle rider. However, Santiago is still at large."

Policemen attached to the Force Intelligence Response Team, (IRT), Abia State, smashed the gang. Aside from Rafael, other gang members in IRT custody are; Basil Macdonald, Emeka Uche, Uzoma Samuel, Sunday Chibuike, Godwin Kalu and Abraham Thompson.

They were arrested after the Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Mohammed Adamu, instructed the head of IRT, a Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Abba Kyari, to select a crack team and head to Abia State, to find out and arrest the gang, which has been targeting POS operators.

The police alleged that the gang on November 1, 2020, kidnapped Achinulo Ignatius, 59, at the Osisioma junction, along Enugu-Port Harcourt Expressway and killed the victim after collecting a ransom of N2.5 million from his relatives.

The activities of these gangs caused POS operators and business owners in Aba Town to live in fear.

Alarmed businessmen and women had synergised and written a letter to the Abia State Governor, Okezie Ikpeazu, asking for help.

The governor called for a security meeting, where he urged traditional rulers, vigilante groups, tricycle riders and POS operators to work closely with security agents in the state in supplying information. He said that the information would ensure arrest of the gang.

Ikpeazu also offered a reward of N2 Million to anyone with information that could lead to the arrest of the gang or its members.

It was gathered that acting on credible information, Kyari and his men arrested a key member of the gang, later as Godwin Rafael. Rafael was alleged to be the person that shot Chimaobi to death.

A police source said: "Rafael was arrested while he was about fleeing Abia State. During interrogation, he confessed to being a member of the gang which carried out the POS robberies, killings and kidnappings within Aba Town.

"He also disclosed that members of the gang were all recruited from the Vikings confraternity known as Arobaga. According to him, the gang took advantage of the #EndSARS protest in setting up their gang, hoping that there would be no police to hunt for them."