

Benin businessman abducted after crossing into Nigeria for phone call



Adewole

Taiwo Jimoh

A businessman, Mr. Adebowale Adewole, has been abducted by some suspected kidnapers at Ijio town in Iwajowa Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Ijio is a border community between Nigeria and the Republic of Benin.

The victim, who resides in the Republic of Benin, briefly came out to the border town in Nigeria to call his daughter for urgent information. It was at that point that he was abducted by the kidnapers and immediately whisked away into the forest.

Adebowale, who is partially blind, came out to call his daughter, Kemi Adewole, who lives in Lagos, when he was grabbed by the men on June 4.

The distraught daughter said her father called her on Friday evening, informing her of a new development. He promised to call her back on Saturday, in order to brief her further on the new development. Kemi was still waiting for him to call when she received news of his abduction.

She said: "My mum said she was preparing for church on Sunday when she received a phone call

from an unknown caller, informing her that her husband had been abducted. The caller demanded N5 million ransom or they would kill and dump his remains in the bush for animals to feast on.

"My mum said she begged them to spare her husband because we didn't have such an amount of money. They threatened to kill my dad if mum didn't get the money. That was how we started making efforts to raise the money. Mum had to beg them to reduce the money when we couldn't raise such an amount. They accepted and reduced it to N3 million."

Kemi added that on Monday last week, the kidnappers called her mum again and asked her to bring the money to a particular forest in Ijio area about 2pm. The woman was warned not to involve any security agencies.

"Before my mother set out for the journey, she told the kidnappers we were able to raise just N1.2 million. They told her no problem, but that she should hurry up and bring the money to the location they asked her to come to. When she got to the location, she called and informed them that she was at the spot, they directed her to another place; this new venue was a thicker forest and they asked her to come alone. When she was going to the second location, she was told to stop at a junction where she found a bamboo tree as they would send someone to pick the money and thereafter my dad. When she was about to get to the location, the kidnappers called again, this time they asked her to buy them packs of cigarettes and bread. She heard my dad's voice, asking for water; that he was thirsty," Kemi said.

By then it was already getting late. The woman walked for almost a mile to get to the major road, from where she took a motorcycle to buy those items they demanded.

Kemi said: "While taking the items back to where she was directed, she decided to call them, but the phone was switched off, that was the last

time we heard from the kidnappers. We're worried, especially my mum. We have all been praying that nothing bad would befall him. It is a terrible experience for our family. My mum had to lodge in a hotel in a neighbouring community with the hope that they might release him at night; probably they didn't want to release him at day time. We have asked my mother to come back home, so that we don't lose on both sides. Since then we have been hoping for God to secure his release with His power.

"My mother is a strong woman. She has been praying and fasting for my dad's release. We have also reported the case to the police at Ijio village. They promised to relay the message to the state command at Ibadan for proper investigation and possible rescue of my father from the kidnappers."

Kemi, however, said that two days after they lodged a complaint with the police, they received a call from the police that they had found her dad's bag, containing some of his documents and the cyclist, who used to convey him whenever he crossed to the Nigerian side.

She said: "Unfortunately when my mum got to the village, the cyclist had been killed and his motorcycle set ablaze by the kidnappers. We believe the kidnappers killed the cyclist because he knew them or probably because they wanted to cover their tracks. Or maybe the cyclist struggled with them when they wanted to abduct my father."

"Whenever my father wants to make any decision, he always calls me to inform me, even if I'm not around him. I'm always involved in his decision making. I also love my father dearly. The policemen also told my mum that my father is a nice man, that whenever he was crossing on motorcycle, he always joked with them and used to buy things for them."

When our reporter called the Oyo State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr. Olugbenga Fadeyi, via his phone to get more facts about the case, his phone didn't go through. He also didn't respond to text messages sent to his phone.