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This Day (Lagos)
26 November 2008

Posted to the web 27 November 2008

THIS DAY

 Emmanuel Ugwu
 Umuahia And Segun James in Yenagoa
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Efforts to checkmate kidnappers in Abia State have continued to yield good results, as the state police command succeeded in killing five suspected kidnappers in separate incidents.

The state police commissioner, Edgar Tam Nanakumo, told newsmen yesterday at the state police command headquarters, that the killing constituted "major breakthrough and achievement by the command," in its efforts to make Abia crime free.

He said two kidnappers were killed at about 8.00p.m. on Tuesday, along Opobo Road, Aba, where the police engaged them in "fierce gun battle," following information that they were planning to kidnap a bank staff.

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The second incident led to the killing of three suspected kidnappers, when the police team rescued a kidnapped woman, Comfort Erundu and killed the three who were keeping watch over her at a "hostage camp," at UgbaUzo-iyi Umuodochi in Nsulu, Isiala Ngwa North Local Government.

This is as an attempt by a three-man gang to kidnap a toddler was foiled by another vigilant parent yesterday, triggering pandemonium on the streets of Yenagoa, capital of Bayelsa State.

The drama took place along the popular Imgbi Road, the street where almost all major newspaper houses have their offices, soon after the three-year-old was dropped off by his mother in front of the school.

The kidnappers must have been trailing the woman who is the wife of Pastor Igoniderigha Deinfa, principal aide to the State Commissioner for Finance and Budget, Dr Silva Opuala-Charles.

Soon after the mother saw the toddler to the gate, one of the kidnappers moved quickly to snatch the child and took him towards his car, a Mercedes Benz 190, when the vigilant lawyer who was behind the woman when she dropped the boy, intervened by grabbing the man by the collar of his shirt. A struggle ensued as the heavily built kidnapper dragged the child towards the parked car.

The struggle attracted passersby who were forced to flee when one of the kidnappers fired his gun, with the lawyer holding on to the boy, forcing the kidnapper to let go, and sped off in his car.

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THISDAY gathered that the mother of the child raised alarm and scampered for safety when she saw the gun, while the mobile policeman believed to be an aide to the victim's father took to his heels when the kidnappers started shooting.

A team of policemen who later arrived the scene shot sporadically into the air to disperse the surging crowd; most of them parents who had come to retrieve their kids.

Contacted, Spokesman of the state Police Command, Iniobong Ibokette, declined comment, saying he was in Uyo on official assignment.

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