

'27 Policemen Die in Search of Kidnappers'

Commissioner of Police, Abia State Command Jonathan Johnson, yesterday said the command had lost not fewer than 27 police officers in the last six months in the ongoing war against kidnappers and other criminal elements in Obingwa Local Government area.

Speaking during a parade of 11 persons including two policemen suspected to be

w Fate Aug 27

urged the court to set aside the suspension slammed on them on June 22 pending the final determination of their main suit.

However, in a fierce legal fire works that ensued, the Speaker urged the court to dismiss the motion of the suspended lawmakers for being frivolous and lacking in merit.

Bankole, who was represented by Mr Afolabi Afolayan argued that what the suspended lawmakers were seeking was a short - cut to justice, adding that there would be nothing left for court to adjudicate upon once the embattled lawmakers were returned to their seats.

From Emmanuel Ugwu

in Umuahia

engaged in abducting people for money, Johnson said Obingwa, Obehie and Ugwunagbo had remained the notorious hotbeds of criminalities in Abia.

He said the vast land mass of Obingwa was making it difficult to make speedy progress in routing the criminals, adding that not even 2,000 policemen could effectively cover the area more so as the people were not cooperating with the police since kidnapping had become a community business.

"It is not easy breaking through the rank of the people to get information because every person within the area is a potential kidnapper," he said.

The arrest of two policemen of the mobile force - Cpl Isaiah Eziaku and PC John Alomona - has further reinforced the complicity of some law enforcement officers in the thriving business of kidnapping but Johnson said the police would continue to weed the force of bad eggs.

The police also rescued a victim, Mrs Victoria Ori, 48, kidnapped on July 10 by a four-man gang of hoodlums, who had kept her for 16 days

demanding a N20 million ransom before she was rescued at Umuezechi in the local government without any ransom paid.

The commissioner said with the number of arrests made so far, the police were getting closer to solving the riddle over the July 11, 2010 kidnapping of four journalists and their driver.

"We are getting very close to the issue of the kidnapped journalists," he said, adding that while searching for the main suspects in the journalists kidnap saga, the police stumbled upon and smashed a gang of pipeline vandals.

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