

4 Suspected Kidnappers Killed as JTF Apprehends 17

The Joint Task Force (JTF) on security comprising the Police, Army and the State Security Service (SSS) in Imo State yesterday, paraded 17 suspected kidnappers and various arms and ammunition recovered from person's suspected to be kidnappers operating in the state and its vicinity.

In Delta State, JTF in Isele-Kpetime, near Asaba the state capital, shot dead four suspected kidnappers in a gun battle, while five persons were reported shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Sapele, also in the state.

However, the arms recovered during the parade of the kidnappers included rocket launcher, four Ak47s, live bullets, a Toyota Camry with registration No CH 92 FKI, and a 4Runner Jeep with Reg. No Abuja HV 431 ABC.

Similarly, the joint force also freed 27 victims, who had initially been held hostage by the kidnappers. The victims included Chief Anthony Elebolisa, Mr. Anthony Uche Mgberekpe, wife of a former House of Assembly member, Mrs. Nzekwe, who represented Nkwere state constituency in the Imo State House of Assembly among others.

Briefing journalists jointly at the Police Command headquarters in Owerri, the Imo State capital, the Brigade Commander, 34 Brigade, Obinze, Brig. Gen. Modebo Alkali, said the joint security operatives shot dead one of the suspects, injured one while the other three members of the gang escaped.

He explained that he would resist any attempt by kidnappers to make the state ungovernable as the JTF was poised to fish out the suspected kidnappers no matter where they were hiding.

The Assistant Commissioner of Police in charge of operations in the state command, Mr. Celestine Okoye, said the JTF was determined to protect lives and property of residents.

Equally speaking, the Director of SSS in the state, Mr. Kalama Samuel, said the JTF would try as much as possible to ensure the safety of lives and property in the state as well as ensure that the activities of kidnappers were checked in the state.

While calling for the collaboration between the security operatives in the state and the media, he added that security could not work effectively without the partnership.

However, reports said the patrol team, acting on information, had trailed the kidnappers who upon citing the team, opened fire on the

•Frees 27 victims •Gunmen kill 5 in Sapele

From Amby Uneze in Owerri, Victor Efeizomor in Asaba and Omon-Julius Onabu in Warri

team, during which four of them (kidnappers) were killed.

The suspects, who wore charms of various shapes, were in two cars—a Toyota Avalon, marked EPE 217 AC and a Volkswagen Golf, with registration No. LAGOS SB 164 KJA, which were also recovered.

Other items recovered from the hoodlums include three AK 47 rifles, one pump action, 15 AK 47 magazines, 341 rounds of live ammunitions, six live cartridges and six Nokia phones.

The new Commissioner of Police in the state, Mr. Ikechukwu Aduba, who paraded the slain kidnapper's corpses at the command headquarters in Asaba, said: "My men immediately proceeded to the town, on sighting the team, the robbers opened fire on the patrol Hilux Jeep. The men responded swiftly and gunned down four of the unidentified kidnappers."

He also commended the synergy between the police and the vigilante group, which led to the arrest of one Chuks Nwaebuli, and Dumbiri Onwuegbuzia, both of whom were alleged to be cultists.

While stating that one AK 47, one magazine, two locally made pistols, six cartridges, two GSM phones and one machete were

recovered, Aduba declared: "Operation fire-for-fire" against hoodlums operating in the state.

He said: "Expect fire-for-fire from me. The state is under siege and we can't continue this way. They opened fire on my men. This is the result. Only yesterday here, they went on shooting spree in

Sapele, killing four men who were enjoying themselves. I have warned my men that if anyone allows hoodlums to take over his, he is gone."

Meanwhile, the gunmen were said to have stormed a public drinking bar located opposite Okotie-Eboh Grammar School on

Macpherson Road, leaving a female bank manager with an old generation bank in Sapele and four other yet-to-be identified persons dead. Several others also sustained injuries from the gun assault, which reportedly occurred at about 8:30pm on Saturday.

The deceased female banker was said to be married to a notable car dealer.

The attackers, it was gathered,

had shot the victims, who were with some female partners in the bar, with their AK-47 rifles before fleeing the scene immediately in an unidentified car.

THISDAY learnt that two of the critically wounded persons had been referred to the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) from the General Hospital, where the injured were rushed after the assailants departed.

John: Family Alleges Sabotage, Calls for Probe

•NHRC condoles with IG

From Wole Ayodele in Jalingo

Abuja.

According to him, "My brother was about returning to Abuja by road and his convoy was ready to take off when he was asked to join the helicopter and initially he was hesitant but was prevailed upon to enter the helicopter. His convoy was still on ground after the helicopter took off when the crash occurred."

Wondering why he was not allowed to return to Abuja by road, he asked "Why did they insist that he should return to Abuja with the helicopter? Why was he not allowed to return by road through which he came to Jos? We learnt the chopper was new and it was being used for surveillance since the bombing of St. Finbarr's Catholic Church, so why did it develop problem that fateful day?" he asked rhetorically.

Mr. Baraya John, younger brother to the late DIG who made the family's position known, while speaking to THISDAY in Jalingo, at the weekend, revealed that contrary to reports that John travelled to Jos from Abuja in the chopper, he actually went by road and was about returning to Abuja by road when the chopper was provided to take him back to

ly.

Meanwhile, NHRC in a condolence letter signed by the Executive Secretary of the commission, Prof. Bem Amgwe, said the death of John was a big shock and a great loss not only to the Nigeria Police but the entire nation, who would miss his invaluable service.

Obasanjo: Britain Lags Behind BRICs in Africa's Race

Britain is being overtaken by emerging economies, such as India and Brazil in the "race" for a share of Africa's new and fast-growing markets, according to former president Olusegun Obasanjo.

In an interview with *The Telegraph*, a British newspaper, Obasanjo warned that Britain was so focused on opportunities in China and India that it was missing out on the world's hidden growth story. If it does not wake up to Africa's rapid development, Brazil and China could replace the City of London as the continent's main source of finance capital, he said.

Obasanjo was speaking as head of a trade delegation to India, some of whose leading companies have invested heavily in Africa's energy, power, steel and agricultural sectors in the past five years.

He pointed to sub-Saharan Africa's 5.5pc growth this year and predicted foreign direct investment of more than \$150billion (£95billion) by 2015. He said he feared Britain might not get its share of the spoils if it did not wake up to the scale of opportunity.

"The fact is that in the past three days or so the Brazilian economy has overtaken the UK economy. The Chinese are so aggressive in Africa and the Indians are now following suit. The Brazilians are not too far behind. Are countries like the UK doing enough? Having had the advantage of being the colonial master, they can do more than they are doing," he said.

Obasanjo said he believed Britain could claim a much greater share of Africa's future, energy, consumer and agriculture markets, but was too focused on other markets.

'How We Would Achieve Constant Power Supply'

By Sunday Okobi

Rivers State Governor, Chibuike Amaechi, yesterday disclosed steps taken by his administration to actualise the pledge made to the people to provide uninterrupted power supply in Port Harcourt and the entire state from December this year.

Explaining in a statement made available by the state government during the second 'Dissecting The Amaechi Administration' at Government House, Port Harcourt, the governor who was represented by the Commissioner for Power, Augustine Nwokocho, said N30billion had been set aside to ensure that the administration meets this target.

Nwokocho said what the state government was doing to get 24 hour power supply this year was "to generate enough capacity, have a robust transmission infrastructure

that will take the power to the people, to their neighbourhood and then have a very solid distribution infrastructure that will take it to their routes, and so we are addressing these three things – power generation, transmission and distribution.

"Unlike the previous system where they were all given to one person, here we have a total of 10 outfits doing different things to ensure that we deliver on time and we have divided this work into smaller units that are deliverable, faster and better. We have also focused on getting the quality of men that can deliver this work and deliver them well.

"We have got Saipan Nigeria Limited to build a power substation. We have Weltech doing a

medium voltage substation... We have selected people in that category, people who we believe can deliver based on their track record," he said

The commissioner said the state is "currently pursuing rigorously the transmission aspect of our power project," saying a reliable vendor has been found for power distribution in the state.

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