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How kidnappers of Okonjo-Iweala's mum killed 72-yr-old woman

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*Minister's mother escaped death by whiskers

By Ifeanyi Okolie

Prof. Kamene Okonjo, the mother of Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister for the Economy, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, who was abducted from her palace in Ogwashi-Uku, Delta State by a gang of kidnappers, last December, may have been lucky to leave the kidnappers den alive. Sunday Vanguard gathered, last week, that her abductors had wanted to keep her longer than they did, even after receiving N13million ransom. Findings revealed that her abductors had planned to collect the entire N200million they demanded before changing their mind, to free her following a disagreement in the kidnappers camp.

Prof. Okonjo was deemed lucky after one 72-year old Mrs Reginat Obi Daity, a resident of Ogwuashi-Uku, also allegedly kidnapped in the Delta community by the same gang, was murdered allegedly because the ransom paid on her was considered paltry.

The gang was said to have demanded N10 million ransom for the release of victim, Daity, but got N2 million.



Prof Kamene Okonjo and Minister of Finance, Prof. Okonjo-Iweala
Infuriated, the kidnapers reportedly shot the woman dead.

Some members of the law enforcement community believed providence played a crucial role in the release of Prof. Okonjo by the kidnapers since a 'paltry ransom'- N13 million out of the N200 million demanded – was also paid in her case before an ex-palace guard, Chiejine Onochie, who allegedly masterminded the abduction, panicked and called off the operation.

Onochie's action was said to have cost him his own share of the N13 million ransom paid.

His alleged partners-in-crime simply asked him to look for another victim to be kidnapped and be compensated from the proceeds.

Outstanding ransom

The palace guard, Sunday Vanguard was told, immediately zeroed-in on Daity, the 72-year-old woman, whose son, a Lagos-based customs licenced clearing and forward agent, was, in his calculations, wealthy.

And that marked the beginning of the deadly kidnapping saga involving the Daity.

She was allegedly kidnapped in March 2013 by the gang.

Two days later, she was shot dead after the gang had collected N2 million ransom out of the N10 million they initially demanded.

Their anger was that the N8 million balance was not forth-coming. The victim's decomposing body was found in a place called 'the Evil Forest' in Edo State.

Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Umar Manko, on Monday, announced the bursting of the gang and the arrests of Onochie, the alleged mastermind of Prof Okonjo and Daity's kidnapping, aged 32, and Chukwuma Okoh, 31.

According to Manko, following the arrests, the officer in charge of the state Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), Superintendent Abba Kyari, was directed to go after the gang leader, identified as Jideofor Ogbue, but also known as Marvelous.

Three Lagos SARS teams were, according to security sources, then deployed to Delta, Edo and Rivers States and they arrested Marvelous, 22, in his hide-out in Port Harcourt. Marvelous was thereafter used to arrest five other members of his gang identified as Michael Ojeabulu, 23; Endurance Oke, 22; Ibrahim Abubakar, 28; Buhari Amajola, 27; Hassan

Husseini, 29, in Delta, Enugu and Edo States.



The suspected kidnappers paraded by the Lagos Police Command for the kidnapping the mother of Minister of Finance 82 years old Prof. Okonjo.

Marvelous told Sunday Vanguard, last week, that the gang's modus operandi after kidnapping relatives of wealthy people was to use the victims to extort. The alleged gang leader narrated: "In cases where the victims relatives refused to cooperate, Peter, a gang member yet to be arrested, would either kill or harm them. He told me that he was doing that in retaliation for the police killing of his brother who, he said, was an innocent man. I tried stopping him but he would not listen. He is highly temperamental; everyone in the gang avoids him. He was the one who shot the 72-year-old woman when her rich son refused to pay us the balance of N8million ransom we demanded.

Madam Okonjo was lucky that Onochie and Okoh panicked; maybe because of the heavy presence of security men at Ogwuashi-Uku at that time and they asked us to free the woman which we did."

Sweet & Soul



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