

Kidnappers kill 72-yr-old shopkeeper after taking N1.7m ransom

UMUAHIA — GUNMEN have killed a 72-year-old businessman, Chief Alex Okonkwo, in Umuahia, the Abia State capital, the News Agency of Nigeria reports.

Family sources said yesterday that the man was abducted on June 8. The source said after a ransom of N1.7 million was paid, the body was discovered dumped in a bush path in Olokoro community, near Umuahia on June 16.

Okonkwo, who hailed from Akata in Oru East Local Government Area of Imo State, owned a popular supermarket on Lagos Street, Umuahia.

The man was kidnapped at about 8 a.m. in the supermarket by four heavily armed men. The gunmen reportedly shot sporadically into the air before they bundled the man into the booth of their Camry car and sped off.

The deceased's son, Ndubueze, said the family was later informed by a senior police officer from the Central Police Station, Umuahia that a corpse was found lying in a bush path on Olokoro Road.

Ndubueze said he went with the police officer to the spot, where he identified the remains as his father's.

He said: "I personally went with the officer to the place and I identified the body as my father's." He said he noticed a slight bruise on one of his father's thumbs.

Ndubueze also said that while in the abductors' custody, his father urged his mother to raise the money for the ransom. He disclosed that his father suffered from diabetes and hypertension before the incident. According to him, the cause of death will be ascertained after an autopsy.

He regretted that hoodlums

could commit such a heinous crime in broad daylight in the city, unchallenged, and appealed to security operatives in the state to rise to the challenge of providing security for lives and property.

Spokesman of the Abia State Police Command, Mr Geoffrey Ogbonna, confirmed the inci-

dent in a telephone interview, saying investigation was still going on, adding that no arrest had been made.

Ogbonna appealed to the public to assist the command with useful information that could help track down perpetrators of the crime.



Grinding machines and other items donated to widows and orphans of slain police officers in Nasarawa State by Police Officers Wives Association (POWA) in Lafia, yesterday. Photo: NAN.

Pregnant woman commits suicide in Edo

4 die in Kogi auto crash