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## How kidnappers killed Sylva's uncle

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By Samuel Oyadongha, Yenagoa

The police in Bayelsa State have recovered the corpse of the kidnapped 87 years old, Chief Benson Ayerite Adigio-Eseni, a retired major and uncle to former governor Timipre Sylva at Kula, a border town between Rivers and Bayelsa on the Atlantic fringe.

Saturday Vanguard learnt that the ailing octogenarian, who was seized and whisked away from his country home in the coastal town of Okpoama in Brass local government area of Bayelsa State on July 28, by armed men reportedly died in the hands of his captors on August 14.

According to the police authorities, the corpse of the deceased was recovered in a shallow grave where it was buried by the kidnappers.

The corpse, which was located Thursday was exhumed under the supervision of a senior pathologist from the state Ministry of Health and deposited at the morgue of the Federal Medical Centre, Yenagoa.

Meantime, a 27 years old suspect has been arrested in connection with the abduction and death of the former governor's uncle.

The state Deputy Commissioner of Police, Mr. Bello Ahmed, while parading the suspect, said the family of the deceased has been contacted to be present during the conduct of full autopsy by a pathologist at the Federal Medical Centre to ascertain the cause of death.

He added that a special police team had been deployed to track down the suspects in the heinous crime.

Ahmed in a prepared statement read to newsmen at the state police command Friday said: "Today, (Thursday) 28th of August, 2014, on a tip off, a combined team of security agencies in Bayelsa State and men of the Bayelsa Ministry of Health were led to a border town between Rivers and Bayelsa State near Kula village, where a shallow grave was discovered.

"On excavation, the body of the late Chief Adigio-Eseni, aged 87 years, who was earlier kidnapped on 28th of July, 2014 by



(<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/08/kidnappers-killed-sylvas-uncle/ayerite-adigio-eseni/>)

Late Chief Benson Ayerite-Adigio-Eseni

unknown gun men, was exhumed from the shallow grave under the supervision of a senior pathologist from the Bayelsa Ministry of Health. The corpse was removed and deposited at the Federal Medical Centre Mortuary, Yenagoa for autopsy.”

The corpse, it was learnt, was found wrapped in polythene bag in the shallow grave.

### N5m ransom paid

A family source who confirmed the sad turn of event said: “we have been informed by the police and would be present during the conduct of the autopsy.

“It is sad that a man that served the nation as a military man and retired as a Major was killed in a dastardly manner. It is a shame on the security of the state and the nation. We paid ransom of N5million for his release and yet he was killed.”

### How he died

The arrested suspect, simply identified as Nelson, aged 27, an indigene of Tofuogbene in Burutu Local Government Area of Delta, confirmed to newsmen that the octogenarian died on August 14 in their custody even before they collected the ransom from the family.

Nelson, a secondary school leaver, said he was recruited for the abduction of Chief Adigio-Eseni through deceit and coercion by leader of the gang identified as Ebino.

He added that they purchased a Thuraya phone from hitch plaza in Warri, Delta state for easy communication.

Nelson said his share of the ransom, which was given to him by the leader of the kidnap gang was N250,000.

According to the suspect, “we begged him to release the man that the family had refused to discuss ransom. The old man was confused. At night, while the man was eating, he started choking and slumped. We rushed to his aid but he died.

“One Ebi, who has been discussing with somebody from the family side, said he would take the corpse of the old man back to the family. We argued and he insisted that he would bury him at Kula village.

“He buried the old man at the entrance of the community. While we all wanted to leave and tag the kidnap as bad business, Ebi insisted on collecting the ransom. He said his share would assist him to escape abroad.”

The arrested suspect said after he was given his share of N250,000 he was dropped in Port Harcourt for onward journey to his base in Warri, Delta State.

He said he was arrested while trying to locate a lawyer that would help him to report himself to the police.

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