

3 colleagues of kidnapped, murdered NDPR staff arrested

ON DECEMBER 21, 2017 3:06 AMIN **NEWSCOMMENTS**

By Evelyn Usman & Okolie Ifeanyi

Seven suspected members of the kidnap gang that abducted and murdered the Production Manager of Niger Delta Petroleum Resources NDPR, Mr. Ubani Onyema, after collecting N10 million ransom at Woji, Port Harcourt, Rivers State capital, have been arrested by the Inspector General of Police Intelligence Response Squad.

Surprisingly, three members of the gang— Nkere Uwam, 38; Okpako Emperor, 37; and Adimibe Kanayo, 30— were discovered to be colleagues of the victim.

Other suspected members of the gang are its leader, Nduka Alaribe, 34; its second-in-command, Godstime Eme, 35; Wisdom Chidi, 35, and Ayakazi Woyin-Kuro, 32.

Vanguard gathered that after he was abducted, a member of the gang contacted his company on phone and demanded N100 million as a ransom for his release.

After much bargaining, they accepted N10 million with an instruction to the negotiator to drop the money at a designated point.

Apprehension set in after Onyema was not released as expected. His captors could not also be reached on the mobile lines with which they contacted his company.

Police sources hinted that: “ IRT operatives deployed to Port Harcourt by IGP Ibrahim Idris swung into action as the hostage was not released after the ransom was paid as negotiated and agreed.

“Unrelenting follow up by the IRT Team eventually led to the arrest of seven of the kidnappers.

“The suspects confessed to various roles they played in the kidnap and also admitted that the hostage, Ubani Onyema, died on the very day of his kidnap as a result of gunshot wounds sustained during his abduction.”

Leader's confession

The leader of the gang, Alaribe, whose operational name is *Abiola*, stated that he organised the operation, recruited the hostage keepers and brought the two cars used for the kidnap.

He added that “I also led members to pick up the ransom.”

Asked why they killed the victim, he said: “It was not intentional. He was mistakenly shot on the day he was kidnapped. He died that very day and we threw his body into the river.”

Also asked why the gang went ahead to collect the ransom after the death of its victim, he kept mum.

His second in command Eme, a graduate, said: “I purchased a preregistered SIM, which was used during negotiation.

“I also monitored his movement on the day of his kidnap and accompanied Abiola to pick up the ransom.”

On his part, Uwam, who worked in the same company with the deceased, said he masterminded the kidnap.

His words: “I gave them every information they needed on my boss. I brought in two other staff of the company, Emperor and Kanayo.”

Another suspect, Chidi, said his role was to supply arms to the gang.

During preliminary investigations, Police sources said Chidi was discovered to be the leader of a notorious cult group known as Greenlanders, that had been terrorising Ahoda-East Local Government Area of the state, while the sixth suspect, Woyin-Kuro, said he only assisted in the recruitment of gang members.

Items recovered from the suspects included one AK-47 rifle and the two vehicles used in the kidnap.

Efforts, according to Police sources, were on to recover the body of the victim from the river the suspects claimed to have dumped it, as well as to arrest other suspects.