Police rescue 17 kidnapped victims in Delta

●Kill 2 hoodlums, recover one rifle, 2 magazines

By Festus Ahon

ASABA—POLICE operatives attached to the Delta State Command have rescued 17 persons suspected to have been abducted by gunmen in Ughelli, after a shootout with gunmen.

A hotelier identified as Zion Onofighe and 16 of his workers were reportedly kidnapped by the gunmen.

Meanwhile, two suspected armed robbers were gunned down in Asaba, the state capital, during a gun battle with the police.

The 16 workers and the hotelier were reportedly attacked by gunmen at the hotelier's building site in Ogor community, Ughelli, adding that patrol teams of police operatives, who were dispatched to the scene, engaged the hoodlums in a shootout and rescued the workers unhurt.

The police source said a Toyota Highlander SUV was recovered.

Confirming the incident, acting Public Relations Officer of the command, DSP Bright Edafe, said the 17 victims were rescued, adding that a manhunt for the fleeing suspects was ongoing.

Edafe, who also confirmed the Asaba gun battle with hoodlums, said two of the suspected armed robbers were killed, saying the command's Rapid Respoy Squad, RRS, received a distress call that robbers/kidnappers were operating around the FRSC office in Asaba.

He said the team immediately mobilised to the scene and engaged the hoodlums in gun fire.

He said: "Two of them were fatally injured and later died, while others escaped. One AK-47 rifle with BREECH No. 19567 and two magazines with 18 rounds of live ammunition were recovered."

Also, operatives of the anti-kidnapping squad of the Federal Capital Territory, FCT, Police command rescued a kidnap victim in Kwaita village, along Kwali axis.

It was gathered that the female victim was freed after the police response team engaged the kidnappers in a gun battle.

"In the process of repelling them, a police officer sustained a gunshot injury on his leg," one of the police officers, deployed for the rescue mission, disclosed.

He said efforts are on to apprehend the kidnappers and rescue any victim of abduction in that axis.