

## Gunmen on rampage in Imo

While Uzodimma was speaking, Vanguard gathered that gunmen at the weekend ran rampage in Imo, operating in Ihitte Uboma, Obowo and Ehime Mbano local government areas of the state.

It was gathered that in Ogbotoukwu community, Obowo local council area, a security personnel of an MTN facility, close to St. Mary's Catholic Church, Mr Nwokem Nwokennanna, was reportedly called on his phone and asked to bring the keys to the facility for the refuelling of the generating sets.

Nwokennanna, who was also a traditional bone setter, "immediately moved to the facility on his motorcycle and as soon as he alighted from his bike, the criminals opened fire on him at point-blank range."

Continuing, the villager, who recounted the incident on strict grounds of anonymity, said that "while the man died on the spot, other people, who heard the gunshots, scampered for safety."

Similarly, some unidentified gunmen reportedly stormed the rural Umudibia Alaiyi Umualumaku Umueze autonomous community where they beheaded one Emmanuel Nwokenkwo and disappeared with his head.

Nwokenkwo's headless remain was said to have been deposited in Alanwemadu Morgue, Umuezeala Owerri, while another vigilante officer was killed in his office, in Oriendu Market.

In yet another incident, a retired teacher turned politician, Mr Collins Nwachukwu, was said to have been abducted in broad daylight in his wife's shop at Umuokoro Lowa, Ihitte Uboma local government area of the state.

At the time of filing this report, Nwachukwu was yet to regain his freedom.

Also weekend, unidentified criminals reportedly wrote petroleum products marketers in Isinweke, the headquarters of Ihitte Uboma local government area, to part with the sum of N20 million if they were interested in continuing with their businesses or close shops immediately.

A marketer who did not want his name in print confirmed receipt of the letter, but despite pressure mounted on him, bluntly refused to disclose his next line of action.

Meanwhile, the Imo State Police Command, yesterday, said it had arrested nine suspected kidnappers and freed two of their victims, Dominic Chukwuma and Silas Nnawubia in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area of Imo State.

The Imo State Police Public Relations Officer, PPRO, Micheal Abattam, who disclosed this in a statement after parading the suspects in the Police headquarters in Owerri, said the two victims were kidnapped on 30th April 2022.

He said: “Following a report of the kidnapping of one Dominic Chukwuma and Silas Nnawubia respectively, received by the Command’s Anti-Kidnapping Unit on 30th April 2022, the operatives immediately swung into action after gathering both credible and technical intelligence where the radar revealed the location of the criminal’s hideout in Ahiazu Mbaise LGA of Imo State.

“The police operatives on 5/5/2022 at about 23:50 hours stormed the kidnapper’s den and arrested one Obinna Onuoha, aged 35 years, a native of Umuegwu Mpam; and Igbokwe Joseph, aged 35 years, a native of Umuchoko Ihitte Aforukwu, both natives of Ahiazu Mbaise LGA of Imo State and the victim held in captive was gallantly rescued unhurt.”

The Police continued: “In the course of interrogation, the suspects confessed to the crime of kidnapping and revealed how they escaped from Imo Correctional Centre jailbreak of 5th of April, 2021 and after they escaped, they got a safe hideout in Ahiazu Mbaise, formed a kidnap syndicate with their hideouts in strategic areas in the state. And they have been the ones involved in most of the deadly kidnapping incidents recorded in the state.”