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They showed me decomposed corpse when I negotiated for N10m — Methodist Prelate, Uche

By Gabriel Olawale & Steve Oko

●Confirms N100m ransom was paid ●For more than 15 hours, we had no water, food ●Says no govt officials, police or army involved in his release ●Denies IPOB involvement

LAGOS—THE Prelate, Methodist Church of Nigeria, Dr Samuel Uche, yesterday narrated how their kidnappers settled for N100 million ransom, which they asked be packaged in five Ghana-Must-Go bags for their release.

It will be recalled that Uche was kidnapped on Sunday along the Enugu-Port Harcourt Expressway in Umunneochi Local Government Area of Abia State with Methodist Bishop of Owerri, Rt. Rev. Dennis Mark and the Prelate's Chaplain.

Speaking about his ugly experience in the hands of the kidnappers, Uche said the whole thing happened like a film and took him much time before he adjusted to reality.

He said: "On our way to the airport to catch a flight back to Lagos after a church function in Abia State, a group of young boys, the oldest around 35 years, came out from the bush and ambushed our cars. They divided themselves into three, some at the front, some at the back while those in the middle were shooting at our car."

"They abducted three out of five of us. The driver and communication man of the church was able to escape, while they captured me, the Bishop of Owerri and the Chaplain. They led us into the bush and tortured us, during the process, I hit my right eye on the tree and even when blood was flowing and my handkerchief was soaked with blood, they didn't feel like anything happened."

Uche said the people, who abducted them, were all Fulani and they expressed frustration at the President and his government, saying they are not actually against Nigeria citizens but President Buhari and his government.

He said, "I told them that I am not a government official and they said that was what saved me, if not they would have killed me outrightly without asking for any ransom. We trekked inside the



From left, Nneoma Florence Kanu-Uche; Prelate Emeritus, Methodist Church Nigeria, Dr Sunday Makinde and Prelate, Methodist Church Nigeria, Dr Samuel Kanu Uche who recently regained freedom from kidnappers addressing the media, yesterday.

bush going up and down for like 15 kilometres.

"At exactly 11 pm, they started the negotiation and said each of us will pay N50 million and the total will be N150 million. I taught it was a joke, I said we are going to pay N10 million, and they said what? They wanted to cut me but didn't before showing me the decomposed bodies of those they have killed."

"These boys were within 18 years and their leader will be around 35 years. One of them understands English but the others were speaking Fulani not even Hausa. They took all my valuables and money."

"In the end, they settled for N100 million and said it was not negotiable that if I talk they will kill us and forget the ransom and go ahead to kidnap others. They even attempted to kill the

Bishop of Owerri and that they will let his blood spill on me then I will know that they were serious."

Uche said while all the drama was ongoing, what pained him most was the fact that soldiers were within the proximity. "Where they are situated, there were soldiers all from Fulani extraction around the area at Nnomajunction, and these boys were going behind them, meanwhile, they kept their cow somewhere numbering about 200."

He said after several calls, the church was able to raise the ransom, adding: "The following day, when I called the church, they said the effort was ongoing to raise the money and they have already raised N30 million. As of 3 pm, the church raised N130 million."

"The kidnappers instructed the church to package the money in five Ghana-must-go bags and make it N20 million in five places. During my

conversation with their leader, he made it clear to me that he was from Sudan and his parent had died. But they gave birth to him in Igbo land around Umuahia where his late father was a cow dealer."

"They threatened that our people that are bringing the money must not involve security men, that if they do, they will kill us and pointed to a certain area where they dump decomposed bodies of those they have killed."

"Around 5:30, the youngest boy among them said, Oga congratulation, you are free, you can go now, we have got our money, let me show you the road. They took us to an old road where they wrote 'Welcome to Imo' and 'Goodbye to Abia'."

No govt official, Police or Army involved in his release

"This is the time I understand what it means to be kidnapped, for more than 15 hours, with no water or food. We were all on the ground inside the bush. If you want to urinate, you need to take instructions. All the efforts made to secure my release were by the Methodist Church of Nigeria, not the police or army."

Denies IPOB involvement

He denied some rumours in certain quarters that he was kidnapped by IPOB.

He said: "Some people are spreading rumour that I said IPOB released me. They were trying to bring political colouration into the matter and this is very sad."

Uche said the kidnappers confided in them that the ransom they are collecting was to raise money for weapons, noting: "That after buying enough weapons, they are going to bring all those that have been put in disarray at Zamfara, Katsina and Zambiza forest to Igbo land to deal with the people residing there because it belongs to them."

"They also revealed that some of their people are also along Lagos-Ibadan expressway and that they are only waiting for a signal. They said 'We will finish you people and take over this land because it belongs to Fulani'."

Uche appealed to the Nigerian government to act decisively otherwise what is happening in the north will be a child's play compared with what will happen in the east.

He said: "The primary purpose of government is to protect lives and property. Any government that failed in that regards has failed woefully."

"Nigeria is on reverse gear, we are nosediving. These guys are operating within a particular area and security operatives are aware that they are there but failed to act."

He seized the opportunity to thank all members of the Methodist Church of Nigeria for the love they showed to him during his ordeal, saying: "I don't know that they love me this much, they showed great love towards me. Thank you all."

Meanwhile, Governor Okezie Ikpeazu of Abia State has attributed the quick release of Uche; Methodist Bishop of Owerri, Rt Rev Okechukwu Michael, and the Prelate's Chaplain to "the grace of God, the fervent prayers of the Christian community, and the well-coordinated response from security agencies in Abia State."

Ikpeazu, who said he had spoken with the Prelate, disclosed that "he is in high spirits."

The governor in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr Onyebuchi Ememanka, expressed gratitude to God for the release of the abducted clerics.

20-year-old mother stabs 17-year-boy to death over dating

By Dayo Johnson

AKURE—A 20-year-old mother of one, Biodun Abayomi, has been arrested by police detectives in Ondo State for allegedly killing a 17-year-old boy, Mohammed Jamiu, over an argument on dating her friend.

The suspect reportedly committed the crime when she was attacked by the deceased and three of his friends on May 28, 2022, at the Ebuile, Okitipupa area of the state.

Reports had it that the three friends accosted the suspect at a riverbank in the community where they beat her up

before she stabbed the deceased in the neck.

Parading the suspect at the state police headquarters in Akure, the state capital, the suspect said the deceased resorted to beating her up after suspecting that she was the one who prevented her friend from dating him.

"On Saturday I went to the river to fetch water. At the riverside, I saw four boys and three girls fighting."

The girls were Hausa, and I spoke to them in the Hausa language that they should leave those boys. After the girls left, the boys came to meet me, saying they have been monitoring me all the while.

"I told them that I have nothing

against them and that when I had an issue with them was when I was pregnant, and after I gave birth, I have let them be."

"They insisted that no, I should go and call my soldiers, that they were ready for the case and that they will fight me."

"One of them (Jamiu) approached me and hit me with a stick. After beating me with the stick, I rushed home to pick up a knife and I returned to the riverbank. But on getting there, they went to hide."

"It was when I was trying to take my bucket of water that they came back again. They started beating me again and it was at that point that I stabbed him."

Escort delivered bike to kidnappers for my sister's release —Brother

By Jimitota Onoyume

WARRI—A female corps member kidnapped over a month ago on the Abuja-Kaduna road, Miss Faith Onoriode, has regained her freedom after the family met conditions set by the kidnappers.

It would be recalled that Vanguard reported the news of the abduction in April.

Her brother, Festus, who was so elated with the release called Vanguard to break the news, saying the sister had been released and was undergoing medicals.

Speaking on details of the release, he said the kidnappers demanded a motorbike, five Tecno phones, airtime and N2 million.

He said they gave them specifications of the motorbike and the mobile

phones, adding that they also sent them airtime worth N100,000.

While thanking God that the sister was not raped he said they went as far as Lagos State to get the bike because it was not sold in Kaduna.

"We paid N2 million, N100,000 recharge card, which they split into N50,000 MTN and N50,000 Airtel that we sent. They also demanded a motorbike and five phones. We bought the bike and added the five Tecno phones."

"When we told them we were ready with the bike, they advised us to arrange for an escort to take it to a spot. And the escort took N300,000 to do that. We used escort to deliver the bike."

"There are about 10 army checkpoints on the road. We waited for sometime before they released my sister. God did it that she was not raped."



One of those attacked.

5 officials of NIWA

sport utility vehicle. Three bullets were extracted by the medical team from the neck of one of the officials rushed to the Nnewi General Hospital.

"We commend the Managing Director of NIWA, Dr George Moghalu, for his prompt response, which enabled quick medical assistance to our injured members."



Generator fumes kill man, pregnant wife, 3 children in Lagos

By Esther Onyegbula

RESIDENTS of Kofo Abayomi Avenue, in Apapa area of Lagos State, have been thrown into confusion, following the discovery of the lifeless bodies of a businessman, Lawrence Olorungbon, his pregnant wife and three children, in their one-bedroom self-contained apartment.

The tragic incident, suspected to have been caused by the fumes of their power generator, occurred

barely two days after the family moved into the apartment.

Vanguard gathered that the secretary to the late businessman, Njoku Treasure, could not reach her boss on his mobile line last Wednesday.

Further attempts to reach him the next day also failed, consequent upon which she visited his residence in Apapa, only to meet the entrance door under lock and key.

She said an offensive odour pervaded the air, and that there were flies

buzzing around. She immediately alerted policemen at the Apapa Division, who visited the scene and forced the entrance door open, only to behold the bodies in their decomposing state.

When Vanguard visited the community, yesterday, the supermarket in front of the building was still under lock.

Some of the neighbours only identified the woman as Iya Israel, as they claimed they were yet to familiarise with her, being a new tenant.

They told Vanguard that the incident could have happened since Tuesday, last week, noting that the family was last seen the previous day.

Neighbours speak

A resident who identified herself simply as Blessing, said, "All the tenants in the building moved in not quite long because the building was renovated. Mr Lawrence and his family parked into the compound on Sunday, May 22, 2022, after they were served quit notice in their previous place at Liverpool area of Apapa. The unfortunate incident occurred on Tuesday May 24, 2022 because that was the last time they were seen. But nobody knew what happened until Thursday, when the lady who worked at their POS shop at Liverpool, came calling. She said she came for cash. It was a careless death, the entire family had just been wiped out".

Another resident, Iya Didi, who plait hair, said, "that Thursday, I went to their compound to make hair for one of the sales girls, Kuftravis, who works at the supermarket. While there, I noticed the entire place was smelling. When I asked what was smelling they said they didn't know. And there were flies everywhere, I didn't know anything had happened to one of the new tenants".

Another female tenant in the same building, said "the last time I saw them was on Tuesday. I saw the man fetching water that night because the pumping machine had been faulty. Throughout Wednesday, we didn't see any of them. And we didn't suspect anything because they just moved in. His car was parked inside the compound and their burglary was shut from outside. That Wednesday, the owner of the supermarket downstairs was complaining that the parked vehicle was obstructing customers from accessing their shop. I called his number, it was ringing but nobody picked. We suspected something was fishing when the entire place began to smell".

Vanguard learned that when the Olorungbon's door was forced open, the pregnant woman was found in her nude, close to the door, apparently trying to crawl outside to cry for help, before she died.

The man's body was found lying down, with his two-year-old baby on his chest, while those of the other two children were found on the bed.

Vanguard further gathered that on Tuesday evening, the late businessman had an altercation with a commercial motorcyclist. The latter was said to have hit the former's vehicle that was parked outside the building. The deceased was said to have insisted on collecting N10,000 from the motorcyclist for repairs of the damage done on his car. Eye witnesses said the okada rider angrily handed him the money, cursing under his breath.



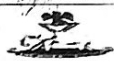
• The house where the incident occurred.

THE NIGERIA POLICE

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14 May, 2022

PRESS RELEASE AUCTION SALES

The Cross River State Police Command wishes to notify the general public of a public auction to be conducted by Mr. Abu Osadionahon Company - licensed auctioneer at SCID Calabar, Area Command Metro Calabar, Atakpa Division/Ikom Division, Federal housing Division, State Traffic Calabar, Akpabuyo Division, Odukpani Division And Efut Division, respectively, Items to be auctioned include:

- One (1) scrap Honda Accord car with reg. No. BW 417 AGL
- One (1) scrap Passat car with Reg. No. CG 636 AHD
- One (1) Scrap Blue Golf car with Reg. No. AA 469-BAT
- One (1) scrap Defender Land Rover Vehicle with REG No. AH912 KRK.
- One (1) scrap Nissan Car with Reg. No. AQ776 LAR
- One (1) scrap gray colour Camry car with Reg. No. BL 374KUJ.
- One (1) scrap Toyota Camry car with REG. No. JJ 553 BP.
- One (1) scrap white Toyota bus with Reg. No. XB 503 DUK
- One (1) Damage Vonto BNY with Reg. No. 636 AQ
- One (1) Damage black Toyota Matrix with REG. No. DUK 395 AA.
- One (1) scrap Blue Audi car with REG. No. KTA 237 XA
- One (1) scrap black Passat Bora car with No. GGU30 AH
- One sky blue Mitsubishi L400 Bus with Reg. No. KJA 403 XK
- One (1) scrap white Infinita Jeep with Reg. No. AQ 221 ANA
- One (1) scrap grey colour Audi car Reg. No. CAL 869 TU.
- Two (2) scrap Toyota Camry's with Reg. No's. DQ 216 BEN & Reg. No. BMK 314 AQ
- One (1) scrap Mushibushi/Benz car with Reg. No. AE 327 KWU
- One (1) Audi wagon with Reg. No. AQ 643 KTA
- One (1) Scrap Volvo car with Reg. No. BD 723 GWA
- One Scrap Red Toyota Camry with Reg. No. AS 22 AHR
- One (1) scrap Red Honda Accord without Reg. Number / One Scrap Audi 80 without Reg. No
- Seven (7) Keko Nappop / Thirty (30) damage Motorcycles / One (1) scrap Daylong Tricycle
- Eleven (11) damage Televisions / Five (5) scrap small generators
- Two (2) damage Computer with three monitors/One UPS/ One damage photocopy machine
- One (1) damage Compressor
- Three (3) damage Stabilizers / One (1) Damage Thermo cool Fridge
- Other household properties etc

Claimers/ Owners should come with original documents within 14 days from the date of this publication, please.

SP UGHO IRENE
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