

One dead as police apprehend eight for kidnapping, cultism in Delta



By Akpokona Omafuaire UGHELLI

ONE suspected kidnapper was confirmed dead in a gun encounter, as Police arrested eight others for kidnapping and cultism in separate operations in Delta State.

The police also recovered several arms and ammunition from the suspects.

The dead suspect according to police had earlier been arrested and was hit by a bullet during an exchange while going after his gang members.

Delta State Police Public Relations Officer, SP Bright Edafe disclosed this in a detailed statement yesterday.

According to him: "On 12/8/2024 at about 0430hrs operatives of CP Special Squad with base in Ughel while on investigation alongside a suspected kidnapper Joel Ochuko Ofoye 'm' who was earlier arrested on 18/7/2024, the suspect led the operatives to Ewu community in Ughelli South LGA of Delta State in the trail of a gun runner who supply arms to them before their kidnapping operation. While they were at it, the team came under attack by the suspect's gang members in a bid to free the said Joel Ochuko.

"The hoodlums were overpowered by the Police as they fled with bullet injuries but the suspect Joel Ochuko Ofoye was hit during the gun duel, and he was taken to general hospital Ughelli where he died while receiving treatment. One Beretta Pistol with four (4) rounds of live ammunition, one pump action with nine (9) rounds of cartridges, and one locally fabricated revolver pump action was recovered, manhunt for the fleeing suspects is ongoing." The statement added.

Edafe further added, "Sequel to a case of kidnap of a 29yrs victim (name withheld) of Kokori Community in Ethiope East LGA Delta State but resident in Sapele Town who was kidnapped on 17/2/2024 at his residence by five (5) armed kidnapping syndicate, and Five Million Naira (#5, 000, 000) was transferred from his account to an unknown bank account by the hoodlums.

"The victim after regaining his freedom, reported to the Command, and the Commissioner of Police CP Olufemi Abaniwonda directed the CP's special squad to investigate and ensure that the perpetrators were arrested and brought to book.

"The operatives led by ASP Julius Robinson acting on available information provided by the kidnapped victim embarked on a technically driven investigation, stormed Sapele town on 11/08/2024 at about 0430hrs and raided the apartment of one Sapiro, real name unknown and upon search a Beretta Pistol was recovered in his room.

"His gang member Tony Binitie m" 29 yrs aka "BOBO" of Big-Warri Community in Warri South LGA Delta, who is the syndicate's Gang Leader and one other co-gang member by name Ejiro Ewuba 'm' 30yrs a native of Owhelogbo community in Isoko North LGA of Delta State resident at Owumi Road Sapele also arrested was one Ayuba Hussaini 'm' 38yrs a resident of Hausa quarters Sapele town the receiver of the victim's jewelries/phones valued at millions of Naira whom investigation also revealed to have received One Million Naira (# 1, 000, 000) transferred into his account from the victim's account and also linked to have received victims valuables from various syndicates both the three(3) suspects confessed to the act.

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"On 05/08/2024 at about 1100hrs a complaint was received by Ofuoma Division that on the same date at about 0900hrs some suspected cultists gathered at Ovine Hotel Afiesere and later went to Ogbovwan Community and shot sporadically killed a dog chained in the house, doors and windows shattered with bullets.

"The DPO Ofuoma division CSP Patrick Uebari upon receipt of this complaint led patrol teams to the scene. The suspects upon sighting the police took to their heels in different directions, the operatives went after them and arrested five suspects all suspected to be members of black axe confraternity.

"Three locally-made cut-to-size guns, one battle axe twelve live cartridges, seven expended cartridge eight phones, and two cross bags. Efforts to arrest the other fleeing suspects are ongoing." The statement added.