Cops arrested over kidnaps in Kampala

By Simon Masaba

In Hollywood movie style five suspected rogue Police officers travelling in private cars around Kampala city are said to have kidnapped Zedeck Ayesiga, a local businessman and sped off to an unknown location. They are said to have called his family for a ransom, thereafter.

For the group of men supposed to keep law and order, the trend of extortion has jumped a notch higher, leaving top Police chiefs puzzled.

The kidnap of Ayesiga last Friday has cast light on a wave of crime that the Police are investigating, with clues leading to more cases.

Until yesterday, the Professional Standards Unit (PSU), had written to the Police's legal directorate, recommending the sacking of at least 60 Policemen over misconduct.

A total of 85 cops, both junior and high ranking, are under probe. The cases range from extortion to robbery, concealing evidence and fraud.

Many of the Police officers cited in the report are traffic Police officers and heads of police stations.

The kidnap

Yesterday, while addressing a press conference at the PSU headquarters in Bukoto, a Kampala suburb, the International Police, Criminal Investigation Directorate and PSU spokesperson, Vincent Ssekate, confirmed the arrest of the Police officers.

Ssekate said PSU arrested three cops – Police Constable Ally Hubara, attached to Bweyogerere Police Station; Robert Buyinza of Old Kampala Police Station and Detective Constable Isifu Magobi attached to the Special Investigations Division.

He revealed that a suspected accomplice, whom he identified as Corporal Opio, attached to Old Kampala Police Station is on the run.

What happened?

Explaining the kidnaps, Ssekate said the Police officers on August 17, allegedly arrested Ayesiga, put him in their car and kept moving with him, while calling his wife, Fortunate Asiimwe, for a ransom of sh5m so that they could release him. Or else they would kill and dump him in a lake.

"Later in the evening, when it got dark, they reportedly took their victim to Kirinya Police Station in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district and detained him without a charge or reference," Ssekate said.

He said Asiimwe reported the matter to PSU and a team was dispatched to Bweyogerere Police Station and Ayesiga was found in custody, where he had spent a night, without a detention order.

"The cops (Magobi and Buyinza) kept calling Asiimwe to meet them at a fuel station around Kireka or Banda on the Kampala-Jinja highway. We found them at the fuel station, waiting for the money and arrested them. They are being detained at railway Police grounds, pending ongoing inquiries," said Ssekate.

Ssekate said preliminary Police investigations indicate that the officers have been collaborating with some civilians to identify young businessmen, frame them and later extort money from them.

He said PSU is conscious about Ugandans, who directly or indirectly require Police services and it is on that basis that the quality of Police services must be audited without fear or favour.

BETWEEN THE LINES: How kidnaps were done

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Kayihura commends PSU

Kayihura has written to the PSU commandant, Joel Aguma, appreciating the good work so far.

A memo pinned at all Police units' notice boards, Kayihura wrote in appreciation of the recent achievements made in a short time.

Kayihura said the message is beginning to go out that our campaign to clean the force is serious and is starting to yield results.

Give my commendation also to the spokesperson (Ssekate) for the good work he is doing to inform the public regularly on the ongoing campaign.

"The image of the force is beginning to recover. Keep it up," excerpts of the memo to Aguma, read in part.

Ssekate said to curb the growing misconduct in the Police force, the Police top management have unveiled a campaign code-named "Together, to Improve Service Delivery."

PSU has asked the public to report cops implicated in



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