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8 SEPTEMBER 2017

Tanzania: Police Gun Down Suspect of Arusha Killings

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The mother of the late Moureen David holds the poster that was sent by kidnappers a few days after her child was abducted. The poster reads "Tomorrow is the end of Moureen because you have failed to meet our demands...".

By Zephania Ubwani

Arusha — With information deemed critical in unravelling the killing of two kids recently kidnapped in Arusha, the prime suspect on Wednesday night led police to the home of his accomplice in the

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But Samson Petro, who surprisingly cooperated well with the police since his arrest in Geita over the weekend, attempted to flee even before reaching the home of the suspect.

Police shot him in the leg and was rushed to the Mt. Meru regional hospital where he died due to heavy bleeding, according to the regional police commander Charles Mkumbo.

"We had taken him to Mkonoo to show us the home of his accomplice he confessed to have cooperated in the killing. He ran away before reaching there. That was around 11:30 pm," he told reporters yesterday. The 18-year-old Petro, who until recently was living in Arusha, was the only main suspect in the brutal killing of Moureen Daudi (6) and Ikram Salim (3) whose bodies were found dumped in a pit on Tuesday in Olasiti ward.

The RPC said a manhunt was underway in search of other suspects in the killings which have shocked the residents of Arusha. They, however, could not say if anybody else has been arrested.

The parents of the two kids, one of them a pupil of Lucky Vincent Primary School, said the kidnappers had demanded ransom amounting to millions of shillings in order to release them.

As the deceased were buried yesterday, Arusha residents are yet to come to terms with the incident.

The city and its environs was subjected to sacrificial killings a few years ago, which were associated with gemstone mining.

Those who spoke to The Citizen have called for thorough investigations, insisting kidnapping could set a dangerous precedent in the city which was notorious for armed robbers some years back.

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The RPC confirmed that police investigations were also zeroing on the owner of an unfinished house where the bodies of the slain children were found and a police officer who hosted him until recently.

The police officer stationed in Arusha is said to be closely related to the deceased but was not happy with the latter's conduct and chased him away from his residence.

"They are brothers from the same family", Mr. Mkumbo said, adding that they are seeking if their relations had any clue to the kidnapping and deaths of the two children.

The owner of the building where the decomposed bodies were found is living in Dar es Salaam and Coast region but frequented Arusha.

Police are also questioning a mobile money transfer agent based at Kwa Mrombo suburb for further clues on the brutal killings.

The agent (name withheld) allegedly made transactions of some Sh.300,000 sent to Petro from his account during the days when the kids disappeared.

The kidnappers are alleged to have demanded Sh. 1.4 million from the parents of the kidnapped school children as ransom.

According to the RPC, the children were kidnapped while playing in the neighbourhoods of their homes between August 21st and 26th. Two other children, Bakari Selemani and Ayoub Fred, were also reported to have been kidnapped in the same area were later released but it could not be established if any ransom was paid by their parents.

The Arusha Urban MP (Chadema) Godbless Lema recently called on the security organs in Arusha to act on the alleged kidnappings of children for ransom payment in and around the city.

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