

Hoodlums invade prison, free inmates

FG, states, LGs share ₦252bn

ERASMUS ALANEME, Abuja.

THERE are indications that the Federal, states and local governments have shared a total of ₦252.112 billion revenue generated in the month of June, 2006.

The money was shared during the month of July, 2006, by the

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COUNTRYMAN

FG TO REINTRODUCE TOLL GATE - NEWS



ANNUAL ESSAY/QUIZ COMPETITION... (r-l) First Bank of Nigeria Plc Chairman, Alhaji (Dr) Umaru A. Mutallab, Oba of Lagos, Oba Rilwanu Akiolu and Managing Director/CEO, Mr. Jacobs Ajekigbe watching proceedings at the grand finale of the bank's annual essay/quiz competition in Lagos, weekend.
Photo: Kingston Daniel

→ **•Govt: It's NARTO**

→ **•Police: It's MASSOB**

ODOGWU EMEKA ODOGWU, Awka

HOODLUMS weekend attacked Central Police Station (CPS) Nnewi in Anambra State, killing two policemen and releasing 14 suspects from the cell before setting the station ablaze.

But the identity of perpetrators of the violence which also claimed two suspected members of the invading party is subject of controversy between the state police command and government.

While police accused Movement for the Actualisation of Sovereign State of (MASSOB) of masterminding the attack, the state government fingered members of National Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO) of unleashing the mayhem but disguising as

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2007 Nigerians react for Odili, Utami, O others

MASSOB members.

Governor Peter Obi who visited the scene vowed to put every machinery in place to bring perpetrators to book and also rid the state of hoodlums.

The invaders, dressed in military camouflage, and numbering over 250 reportedly stormed the station at about 3 pm Saturday in two lorries, a coaster bus and five, L-300 Mitsubishi buses.

Daily Champion gathered that trouble started when policemen in Nnewi stopped a rally of the outlawed group (MASSOB) on Friday, an act, that was said to have incensed the group which grouped and unleashed terror on the city.

Acting Commissioner of Police, Mr. John Haruna, confirmed the attack, and said the police lost two officers in the ensuing gun battle.

Mr. Haruna, said also that 15 other officers sustained various degrees of injuries and another two were lying in critical health condition in an undisclosed hospital.

The commissioner said the group adopted military intelligence approach during the attack, overwhelming the police and releasing 14 robbery suspects including four notorious armed robbers undergoing interrogation at the station.

But Chief Press Secretary to the state governor, Mr. Mike Udah accused members of NARTO of masterminding the attacks. He spoke in an interview with *Daily Champion*.

According to Haruna, "On

Hoodlums

Friday, we received a security report that these MASSOB members mounted road block in Nnobi, Idemili local government and immediately we reinforced from Nnewi and Awka to confront them. In the process, two of them were gunned down in the exchange of fire with the police"

"Some others abandoned their vehicles and escaped with bullet injuries. So we dispatched our intelligence to various hospitals and hide outs of the hoodlums in search of them, but unknown to us, the militants had planned a rendezvous in Nnewi and its environs"

"On Saturday, at 2 o'clock the boys numbering over 250 dressed in military camouflage, bullet proof jackets, heavily armed with AK 47 and other sophisticated weapons stormed the area, though we placed our men at red alert the militants quietly surrounded the station before striking. My men fought gallantly because it was a total war." The commissioner said.

"He maintained that we must apprehend them. We know their hideouts.

We have been going there and have been arresting them and recovering firearms from them but before we could reinforce from Awka and Onitsha to Nnewi CPS, the hoodlums took to their heels. They must be brought to book; we are equipped with intelligent officers suitable to handle the situation. However don't forget that these are real trained guerrilla fighters, but we are equal to the task."

The police commissioner, regretted that the police have not received support and assistance from traditional rulers and other opinion leaders in the state because of fear of reprisal attack on them.

Governor Obi who visited the scene of the attack vowed to put every machinery in place to bring to book perpetrators of the act adding that plans are underway to bring to an end the continuous attack on police men and destruction of federal and State Government property in the state.

Governor Obi assured the police that his government will rebuild the structures burnt down by the hoodlums while commiserating with families of those who lost their beloved in the crises and that the hideouts of the miscreants will be brought to an end.

Daily Champion recalls that hoodlums two months ago burnt the Otolu Nnewi Police Station, set free some armed robbery suspects under interrogation and killed one police constable.

More than five police men have been killed since the Onitsha crises following the order of the state government to flush the commercial city of hoodlums in whatever name but they have refused to leave the parks causing tension to various cities in the state.

Business and commercial activities are at its lowest just as the government has reviewed the curfew imposed on the commercial town and its environs for the fourth time in an effort to bring the situation under control.

centing launcn to say goodbye for now," he said.

Commenting on the problems between FAAC and NNPC over funds withheld by the corporation, Alasoadura, who is the Ondo State Commissioner for Finance, said progress had been made in the effort to resolve the matter.

"We believe we are making progress in resolving some of the knotty issues we had before and any grey area will be resolved before long," Alasoadura said.

He disclosed that some of the money withheld by NNPC had been credited to FAAC, while a balance of N380 billion was still outstanding.

Collapsed

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victims complained of lack of fund to secure alternative accommodation, while others bemoaned the one-week ultimatum given them.

The time frame, according to them, was too short to secure any accommodation.

According to Kunle Oderinde an applicant, graduate of sociology from the University of Lagos (UNILAG), it is only government that can raise needed money for another accommodation within such a short notice.

He said, "we want the state government to assist us with alternative accommodation because we cannot raise N510,000 for another