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Countryman

EFCC: I WILL STEP ON TOES
— MRS WAZIRI



THAT MEANS YOU MAY
PROCEED TO SCHOOL
VERY SOON

Robbers kill Catholic priest, 3 others

NAPOLEON EHIREMEN, Warri

IT was a dark day Monday, for the Christian community and the Nigerian Police Force in Delta State, as dare devil armed robbers shot dead a Catholic Priest and two mobile policemen in separate armed robbery attacks in the state.

This is even as two bank customers in Port-Harcourt Rivers State, were also killed by armed robbers.

The incidents which caused a scare at the various crime scenes happened at Isiokolo, Ethiope East Local Government Area and Orhuwhorun, Udu LGA of Delta state.

Our source said that the two mobile policemen were killed by the same gang of robbers who had earlier shot dead the Catholic Priest just in front of Isiokolo Council Secretariat and adjacent to a Magistrate Court in the area.

The priest, identified as Revered Father John-Mark Ikpiki, was on his way to Isiokolo, where he was to mediate in an accident case involving a worker with a catholic church owned magazine, "Messenger of Peace".

Source said that, the armed bandits shot the priest point blank on the forehead and thereafter dragged him out of his car with registration number EH 447 SMK, and made away with it.

The incident was said to have happened some few kilometers from the Isiokolo Police Station and the magistrate court which was yet to sit as the time the robbers stormed the area.

It paralysed daily activities in the court as the gun scare caused a stampede at the premises of the court. Workers and visitors were said to have fled the area through the back door.

The five-man bandit, according to source later abandoned the car with which they came and a made away with the clergy's car.

The clergy aged 43, until his death, the Parish Priest of St Ambrose Catholic Church, Ekpan and the director of communication for the Warri Diocese. He was born on July 15th 1965.

Reacting yesterday at the Holy Martyrs of Uganda Seminary Effurun where all the Priests in Warri Catholic Diocese had gathered over the killing, the Archbishop of the Benin Catholic Province and Administrator of the Warri Diocese, His Holy, Rev. Fr. Richard Burke expressed rude shock at the incident and condole the family of the deceased and the parishioners left behind by the dead Priest.

He said: "My immediate reaction is one of deep shock, profound sadness, grief. My heart goes out to the family members of late Father John Mark Ikpiki and also to all my catholic brothers and priests. It is with a deep sense of shock and grief. My heart also goes out to the members of St. Ambrose Parish, his colleagues and associates in Veritas Communication which is the Communication Organ of the Archdiocese".

He also condemned the state of insecurity in the state urging police authority to do a thorough investigation into the matter noting that he ask the police to wake up to their responsibility while charge parent and guardian to bring their children in the way of God.

"It has to do with upbringing, education and that is why we have been pleading for years for the government to give us back our schools so that we train our children in the way they are meant to be trained, a good moral education, a good religious education with values of the gospel, human decency so that they can grow up to be law-abiding citizen of the country".

"Of course, it brings into play the whole issue, a growing issue in our community of insecurity. I know the police are doing their best as anywhere you go there are police checkpoints major highways. They have a part to play and they are doing the best they can but it is ironic that this particular incident could happen right

under the noses of the police.

However, it was not clear whether the robbers used the vehicle to rob somewhere before storming Orhuwhorun, in the Warri metropolis at about 11: 00am where they reported killed two mobile policemen and allegedly carted away with their guns.

Source said that the three mobile policemen who were newly deployed to the area on a private security guard of the area, purported left their duty post to purchase some items along the Usiefurun road when the armed gang who drove the snatch car of the Priest they earlier killed hit the three mobile.

Eyewitness said that, the police officers whose identity were not immediately known were reportedly strolling by after making the purchase when the gang who were said to have earlier drove pass them made a turn probably to collect their gun.

The divisional police officer could not be reached for comments when our correspondent visited the area but the locals who confirm the incident said that the police parked over 15 passerby when the storm the area.

When contacted the State Police Public Relation Officer, ASP Charles Muka, however, confirmed the death of the three victim of the armed robbery attack but noted that the two incidents have no link.

He said that it's was only one police constable that was killed in the attack and two as reported.

Meanwhile, the victims of the bark robbery killed who were killed on Tuesday morning along Afam Street and dumped in their vehicles after withdrawing huge amount of money from undisclosed bank.

The robbers later escaped, as they shot indiscriminately scaring away passersby before their escape.

Daily Champion gathered that the robbers who trailed the customers from a bank along the street as they were armed with sophisticated weapons perfected the killing with an aid of four motorcycles.

The incident which attracted market women and school children as the men were laying their pool of blood, even as the robbers escaped with the unspecified amount of money.

Contacted, Police Public Relations Officer, Rivers Police Command, and Mrs. Rita Abbey DSP for comment on the robbery incident that claims the lives of two customers but insisted that she is in a private meeting, just as she declined commenting on the killing of the victims.

She also did not disclose if the robbers succeeded in carting away the money from the deceased persons as they were lying motionless in their vehicles.

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