

Robbers rampage 5 policemen killed



ODOGWU EMEKA ODOGWU,
Awka

FIVE patrol policemen on Awka-Onitsha old road were shot and killed on Tuesday by a gang of armed robbers near a branch of a first-generation bank at Abagana, Anambra State.

Some other members of the police patrol team were reportedly injured in the gun battle.

The Anambra State police command confirmed the report, saying the armed robbers opened fire on the patrol team from the rear.

According to an eye witness, the police at about 10.00pm on Tuesday night parked at

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a drinks spot adjacent to the bank when robbers launched a gun attack.

The eye witness who pleaded anonymity said the robbers came in a Toyota Hilux pick-up van and another vehicle patrolling the road behind the police. He said that the hoodlums might have mistaken the stop of the police at the joint for a move to launch an attack on them, and ostensibly preempted such by opening fire at the policemen.

Although nothing was stolen, many were injured, while others ran away from the scene.

Contacted on the incident, the Command Public Relations Officer Mr. Fedelis Agbo confirmed the incident. He said the robbers after killing the policemen escaped to Nnewi where they encountered other mobile police men on duty.

Robbers

After exchange of gun-fire, the mobile policemen over powered the robbers and they abandoned one of their Hilux pick-up van and escaped with bullet wounds.

AK 47 magazines were recovered and the police authority said no robbery took place. Meanwhile, it would be recalled that armed robbers killed seven people including four policemen and three school children recently during a bank raid at Idi-Ape in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Not even the arrival of the police Armoured Personnel carrier (APC) could foil the robbery as the robbers forced their way into the banking hall to cart away unspecified millions of naira.

Similarly, Osun State would not forget in a hurry the bank

raids by robbers on December 15, in which 10 people were confirmed dead and 40 others injured in the crossfire between the robbers and the combined team of the police and the local vigilante group called "Great Ife."

It would be recalled that the armed robbers numbering about 20 simultaneously stormed three first-generations banks in the Lagere area of Ile Ife as about 10:am, forcing residents who had already set out for work, scampering for safety. The robbers shot sporadically at passers by in a desperate attempt to-escape.

The causality ward of the Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital Complex (OAUTHC) was said to have hosted about 40 people while scores of other injured persons were taken to the Seventh Day Adventist and other private hospitals for medical attention.