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Countryman

Robbers kill 2 policemen in Okigwe

STEVE OKO, *Okigwe*

It was a black Sunday yesterday for men of the Police/ Army joint patrol in Imo State known as *Operation Festival*, when two of their officers lost their lives in a shoot-out with a gang of robbers at the Okigwe junction of Enugu/PortHacourt expressway.

An eye witness, Mr. Okechukwu Oriaku, a lorry driver who escaped the shoot-out by the wiskers as the vehicle in which he was sleeping was riddled with stray bullets, said the robbers ran into the officers on a road block at the junction, and suddenly opened fire on them.

After the gun duel which lasted for about 30 minutes, the robbers fled the scene in a vehicle which they allegedly snatched from travellers in the area, leaving behind the police patrol vehicle in a very bad shape ostensibly to avoid a hot chase.

Confirming the incident, the Area Commander in charge of the zone, Mr Paul Aliyu, said the criminals were apparently annoyed with his men because of the high security network in the area which has severally botched various robbery attempts in recent times.

He therefore, vowed that no amount of intimidation by men of the underworld would deter security agents in the area from safe-gaurding lives and property of residents.

It would be recalled however, that the incident took place barely a week after banking activities in the town were disrupted following rumours of imminent robbery attack that almost resulted to a stampede as people and bank customers scampered for safety.

Bank robbery in Okigwe is becoming a regular occurrence in the past two years following the entry of some new generation banks in the emerging town.



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