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Thur, April 16, 2009

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**Countryman****Police kill 9 suspects, doctor**KENNETH OFOMA, *Abakaliki* and ADEBIMPE AFUNKU, *Abeokuta*

DR. Patrick Akhaba who engaged armed attackers in a gunfire exchange at his Ibafo residence, Ogun State, on Tuesday was shot and killed by the police who he called to save him from gunmen.

Elsewhere in Afikpo, Ebonyi State, the police also on Tuesday killed nine out of a 20-man gang of robbery who attacked a first generation bank (name withheld) in the town.

Other members of the gang, however, escaped with about N21 million stolen loot.

News of the incidents was broken yesterday by the police in separate briefings at Abeokuta, Ogun State, and Abakaliki, capital of Ebonyi State.

Dr. Akhaba was hit in the cross-fire of the police called to help him dislodge the rampaging robbers.

The Ogun State Deputy Commissioner of Police, Mr. Patrick Dukumor, who stood in for his boss Hashimu Argungu revealed the doctor's fate at a news conference on police war against criminals in the state.

Dukumor who described the incident as very pathetic said that late Akhaba had his fingers on his pump-action gun, shooting sporadically at the bandits, even as the policemen had reinforced to rescue him.

He said that the policemen had cordoned off the road leading to the deceased's residence some 200 metres away in an attempt to prevent the armed robbers from escaping arrest.

While the policemen aimed at the robbers in a shoot-out, the victim who had come out of his house to engage the robbers was hit by the bullet of the policemen.

"He lost his life in the process. His pump-action gun, with six live ammunition and spent cartridges were recovered by the police while the anti-robbery team and the state Criminal Investigating Department (SCID) are now on the trail of the bandits," he said.

He also said that within the last one week, the police command was able to recover 31 vehicles earlier snatched by armed robbers during the period.

Five armed robbery suspects were paraded in connection with the theft of one Hyundai Sonata saloon car with registration number Lagos DS 57 AKD, which has been recovered.

Three suspects were also paraded in connection with the alleged murder of one Amidu Fashehun who was reportedly attacked by a group of three men on Itoku road in Abeokuta over minor misunderstanding.

The suspects are Bamidele Soyoye, Semiu Adesegun and Idris Oshimu. The knife said to have been used in that slaying of the victim was recovered.

Several laptop PCs and GSM handsets reportedly seized from the arrested armed robbers were on display at the parade.

The deputy commissioner restated the resolve of the command not to relent in its war against criminals and crime in the state.

"We will continue to make Ogun State inhabitable for all categories of criminals," he declared.

He therefore called on the general public to assist the police in this crusade by offering useful information in this direction. Meanwhile, Ebonyi State command yesterday said it scored a major victory against hoodlums following the killing of nine suspected bank robbers.

It also smashed a three-man robbery syndicate who specializes in snatching cars in different parts of the country and selling them in Ebonyi State.

Parading three of the suspected bank robbers, including a woman, the Police Commissioner, Mr. Kachi Udorji, also displayed five AK 47 rifles recovered when armed robbers attacked the Afikpo branch of a new-generation bank.

The three persons arrested were Mrs. Ozioma Idam from Ukpa, Afikpo North Local Government Area, suspected to be the leader of the 20-man gang, Ukpai Inya from Ezekari in Ukpa, also in Afikpo, who claimed that he went to inform the police about the robbery but was arrested in the process and Uchenna Uko from Mgbom village, also in Afikpo.

Udorji said that "based on the strategy deployed by the mobile policemen in Afikpo, we were able to dislodge the bandits. Nine of them were killed, while five AK 47 rifles, 12 magazines, several rounds of ammunition and a bus were recovered."

He, however, disclosed that though the affected bank had announced that it lost a said N21 million to the robbers, the police only recovered N6, 500.00. He expressed hope that the rest of the bandits who escaped into the bush would be fished out before long.

Sources had told newsmen that about 20 robbers attacked the bank on the popular Eke Market road at about 1.30 p.m. on Tuesday with sophisticated weapons, but were equally confronted by the armed mobile policemen led by the mobile police commander in the state who ensured that his men left no stone unturned in checkmating the robbers.

An eye-witness told newsmen, "While the robbers were trying to escape, their Mitsubishi bus ran into a ditch and then, the four remaining robbers were arrested, while their arms were equally seized."

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