

Gunmen attack Rep, kill 4 aides

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FOUR persons, including former special assistants to the former governor of Ebonyi State, Dr. Sam Egwu, on Food Security and that of Chieftaincy Matters, Messers Chukwuma Ofebe and Moses Ugorji, respectively, were shot dead by gunmen on Thursday while accompanying a member of the House of Representatives, Hon Paulinus Igwe Nwagu to the country home of the national vice chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP, South East, Chief Olisa Metuh during the Christian wake keep of his deceased father at Nnewi, Anambra State.

The federal lawmaker, Igwe Nwagu, who is the chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Rural Development and member, representing Ezza North/Ishielu constituency at the National Assembly, narrowly escaped death by the whiskers as his convoy reportedly ran into gunmen suspected to be armed robbers at the Nnobi area of Awka in Anambra state, culminating in a serious shoot-out between his security detail and the robbers.

While he lost two security aides, Igwe Nwagu however sustained a bullet-wound in the forehead and was rushed to a nearby hospital, according to eye witness accounts. Other people who also sustained serious injuries are a former Majority Leader of Ebonyi state House of Assembly, Chief Tobias Okwuru, a prominent

politician from the state, Chief Christopher Ngwuta also known as GNG, among others.

Saturday Champion learnt that the incident happened at exactly 3.25pm as the convoy of the lawmaker ran into the dare devil robbers, who were said to have earlier robbed a second generation bank along Nnamdi Azikiwe road and were trying to escape through the Nnobi area.

"Apparently sensing danger when they cited the lawmaker's convoy, the robbers, who were said to be occupying an open black Toyota Jeep and a Nissan bus painted in Anambra State government's acquired ANIDS

yellow colours, opened fire and in the process, killed persons in the convoy.

"Initially, we thought it was an assassination attempt on the federal lawmaker, until we were told that the bandits had just robbed a bank and were fleeing the town," an eye witness told our reporter.

Further investigation revealed that those who sustained gunshot wounds, including the lawmaker, were rushed to a hospital at Adazienu area of the town, while plans were underway to move them to the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Enugu, later yesterday.

Meanwhile, as a result of the tragic incident, a delegation of the Ebonyi state government that was supposed to travel to Nnewi for the burial of the Late Barrister J. N. Metuh, could not go again, apparently to mourn their departed compatriots.

"How do you expect us to travel all the way to Nnewi again today when already, our brothers have lost their lives in the course of trying to participate in the same funeral? It definitely would amount to disservice to them. We are not going again," a top government functionary told our reporter on condition of anonymity.

Drug trafficking: NDLEA calls for international cooperation

THE National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has reiterated the need to strengthen international cooperation in the fight against illicit drug trafficking.

Mr. Ahmadu Giade, NDLEA chairman, stated this in Abuja while addressing newsmen at the signing of a memorandum of understanding on the fight against illicit drugs between Nigeria and the United Kingdom.

He said: "We have our own laws in this country and NDLEA can only operate in Nigeria. We cannot go to other countries and operate.

"The criminals have no boundary; they can go anywhere, purchase their drugs, sell them off, get the money and move freely. So this restriction and barriers are

what we are trying to break.

"To make it easy and simple for us, we get in touch with each other to try to tackle this problem, so this is what this cooperation between Nigeria and the United Kingdom is all about.

"We would cooperate operationally for the benefit of both countries."

Giade noted that drug movements from South America were targeted at the West African sub-region, adding that the development was not so about four years ago.

"West Africa is used as warehouse for narcotics, especially cocaine and it is not the responsibility of one country to fight this menace.

"In the region, it is only in Nigeria that the Columbians are not stationed as is

obtainable in other countries of the region," he said.

Contributing, Mr. Lanre Ipimisho, the agency's director-general described the agreement as a demonstration of the government's political will in the fight against illicit drugs.

He said that the European partners have demonstrated a high level of commitment in the fight against the menace.

Ipimisho, while commending the media, called for stronger cooperation with the agency, saying: "the barons are more afraid of the media than the law courts".

The *News Agency of Nigeria* (NAN) reports that the NDLEA chief, Ahmadu Giade, signed for Nigeria while the United Kingdom was represented by the acting British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Peter West.