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**Nigeria: Christmas - Robbers Storm Badagry Express Road**

3 December 2010

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Robbers along Badagry Express road may have staged a violent come back along the route as they attack motorists and road users on daily basis. As at press time an unidentified business man was killed along Abule Ado area of the route. Commercial drivers, traders and other business men have been variously robbed.

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For over six months robbery activities along the road has been on the lull following the deployment of a combined team of military task force code named Operation Mensa and the regular police along some notorious black spots.

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Last Friday, an unidentified man who allegedly returning from a business trip was shot dead by robbers and his cash and other valuables stolen. Drivers were variously robbed and some of the passengers are still counting their losses. Our correspondent witnessed one of the robberies at Abule Ado where about four armed robbery suspects robbed occupants of vehicles in turns at about 7.30pm on Sunday.

Our further investigations revealed that the policemen and even the soldiers deployed along the route have busied themselves with collection of tolls at the Agric -Volks bus stop during the usual gridlock that always characterize the area. The police and the Army and other security agencies mount road blocks to extort money from commercial vehicles, thereby neglecting their constitutional duty of protecting the citizenry.

A driver whose vehicle was robbed told Daily Champion that the robbers attacked him at Alakija area . He said the evil men operated for more than 10 minutes and had left before policemen came to the scene . He said "policemen came and asked us whether we were suspecting any body. If my passengers were not true Christians, one of the policemen wanted to instigate my passengers against me and the conductor so that they would collect money from us or frame us up. He wanted to accuse me of

However, Daily Champion's investigations revealed that the robbers may have devised strategies of 'beating' the security operatives on the road. Before the deployment of policemen at some black spots, businessmen, traders and other road users were molested, harassed and robbed at various designations. The suspects have resorted to attack their victims at unknown black spots such as Fin Niger bus stop, Abule Ado Abule, Oshun, Sign board bus stop market, Olorun sogo bridge, Vespa market.

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complicity but the passengers insisted that the robbers did not connive with me .

Last week traders, especially those that ply their businesses along the route cried to Commissioner of Police Lagos State Mr. Marvel Akpoyibo to save them from the hands of armed robbery men who operate in commercial motorcycle, popularly known as okada. The traders who are alleged victims of the evil menace said the suspects have variously snatched their bags at gun points .

The traders who protested at Ijaniki, argued that since withdrawal of policemen on the highways the robbers on Okada have been on the prowl in the commercial routes. They alleged that aside from the fact that their lives have been exposed to dangers, their businesses have suffered huge set backs by the activities of the robbery suspects.

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A police source in one of the stations along the routes informed our reporter that the pockets of robberies were sequel to the 'ember months' period. He said that policemen are leaving no stone unturned to ensure that the robbers are arrested and prosecuted.

NIGERIA VIDEO FROM

Some of the victims of the robbery attack alleged that some of them operate with Motor bike popularly known as 'Okada'. They noted that the suspects posed as if they were going for their early morning business but are looking for some one to snatch his or her bag. "They are always two and they would pretend as if they were Okada rider and passenger. At times they drove opposite traffic and at times they follow the normal way. But when they see somebody standing at the bus stop or trekking down to the bus stop ,they quickly rushed the person's bag and if you attempt to struggle ,they show you gun tucked inside their panties. On sighting the gun, whether real or toy, you would be forced to comply. They target the bag because they believe that we keep our business money inside the bag for safety"

A victim who deals on second hand ladies bags said the sum of N96.000 and N89.000 were variously taken by the robbers. "My anger is that one day after the incident, just about few seconds, in fact I suspected that the robbers fled when they sighted a police van, policemen who came to the scene refused to pursue the fleeing gun men even when they were sighted. One of the policemen asked me whether I recognized any of the robbers or if I was suspecting any body. He asked me if I copied the number of the okada. I was angry that robbers could operate even within police circles without a minor chase."

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Another victim of the ferocious robbery incident in the area who was part of the protesters alleged that robbers on okada snatched her bag in front of Ijaniki police station and fled. The widow said she borrowed the money from their local meeting and was going to the market when the Okada men who were coming behind her suddenly grabbed the bag and pushed her down. She argued that the guard on duty at the police station witnessed the incident but did not ,either alarm or even shoot on the air to frighten the fleeing suspects. The victim who pleaded for anonymity said the robbers collected about N120.000 and her handset from her. She added that she was going to the Seme market to buy goods for her shop .I was standing at the bus stop around 6am and there were some people there. But within a second one bus came and carried almost all the few passengers standing with me and I was alone. I decided to go closer to the light of Ijaniki police station and n the process, these criminals pounced on me and grabbed the bag. I fell down but they zoomed off at a nerve breathing speed.

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In her own case, a woman who said she strapped her child on her back on the day she was robbed said the Okada driver pretended as if the okada was faulty and waited for her as she was walking towards her bus stop at Ketu. She said she was walking towards them , thinking they were ordinary being but the woman identified as Iya Sule said "when I got closer one of them pounced on me and collected the bag and they fled. I cried and they went off

They called on Akpoyibo to deploy some plain clothe policemen to some pin down points in the area to serve as checks to the activities of the men of the underworld. Lagos State police command said the command is on top of the issue. A source from Police Public Relations Office, Ikeja said "Crime is gradually going down in the state. The commissioner of police has put in measures aimed at providing best security in the state".

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