

# Gunmen kill 6 in Onitsha robberies

Three girls and a boy were killed yesterday in Onitsha, Anambra state, by a gang of armed robbers who raided a beer distributor's shop.

The incident came barely 24 hours after two persons were killed by the hoodlums at Ozomagala street, another area of Onitsha.

An eyewitness told the *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* that the robbers, numbering about eight, rode on three motorcycles and hit the shop few kilometres away from the Central Police Station, demanding money.

She said she was held hostage by one of the robbers who put a gun in her mouth and ordered her to take him to the safe of shop.

"I was pleading with him to spare my life because there was no money as we are yet to receive any stock," she said.

She said three of her colleagues were shot dead outside the shop as she was being dragged inside the shop by the gunman.

She said while the robbers were escaping on their motorcycles, they shot a boy who had raised an alarm on-

posite the shop. She told journalists that the shop owner had reported the incident to the police, while the corpses

of the victims had been deposited at the mortuary of the General Hospital, Onitsha.

When contacted, Mr.

Rashidi Akintunde, the Onitsha area police commander, told newsmen that he was yet to be briefed. (NAN)

## RMRDC makes case for minerals development fund

The director-general of Raw Materials Research and Development Council, Professor A.P. Onwualu, has made case for the establishment of a mineral development fund to facilitate access to fund for rapid development of the mineral sectors in Nigeria.

Professor Onwualu stated this in a paper on 'Mineral Production and Utilisation in Nigeria', at a seminar organized by RMRDC and the Plateau Minerals Development Corporation in Jos.

He lamented that though Nigeria is richly blessed with mineral resources, the country cannot be regarded as a major player or significant solid mineral producer even within Africa.

The RMRDC boss noted that the potentialities of the country are very latent for mineral production to diversify the base of the economy and lead to increased employment generation.

While noting that Plateau

From Rakiya A. Muhammad,  
Jos

is blessed with a variety of mineral resources, Prof. Onwualu said increased efforts should be made on their development and priority attention given to security of life and property to restore confidence of domestic and foreign investors.

The Plateau state governor, Chief Joshua Dariye, in a keynote address at the occasion, disclosed that Plateau state requires N40bn to reclaim its devastated land resulting from mining activities. He pointed out that the impact of mining had not all been beneficial as its deposits had created environmental problems, including ecological destruction of the beautiful Plateau plains, acceleration of soil erosion, pollution of rivers and streams and the impoverishment of the soils of farmlands.

Chief Dariye, who noted that Plateau is endowed with a variety of mineral resources

which if properly harnessed, would bring rapid industrialization, urged the private sector to take up the challenge of developing the abundant minerals in the state.

According to him, government was providing incentives to stimulate investment in the sector.

In a good-will message, the commissioner for environment, Engr. Mark-us Pwajok, called on the federal government to reconsider the issue of reclamation, settlement and compensation of areas affected by mining activities. He stressed that the call had become necessary due to the low level of economic activities among communities whose farmlands have been devastated due to past mining activities.

The objective of the seminar, amongst others, was to provide information on the availability, distribution, quality and reserves of various mineral resources present in Plateau state with a view to sensitizing the interest of investors and entrepreneurs in their development.