

40 Robbers attack bank, raid houses

Armed robbers numbering about 40, yesterday went on rampage in Lagos as they attempted to rob a first generation bank and some residential buildings on Kofo Abayomi Avenue in Apapa.

The police however killed one and apprehended another in a fierce exchange of fire with the robbers and declared the robbery attempt as unsuccessful.

Daily Trust learnt that the robbers stormed the bank at about 2am in four vehicles including a Pathfinder Toyota Jeep and a 36-seater bus, but met police resistance following a distress call. The two vehicles are currently at the Apapa divisional police station.

Confirming the robbery, The Apapa Divisional Police Officer (DPO), Ari Mohammed (CSP) said two guns, 500 expended ammunition, 50 live ammunition and eight magazines were recovered at the scene of the robbery.

Similarly, the Lagos command spokesman, Bode Ojajuni, a superintendent, confirmed the incident. He said: "Our men are more determined to face the robbers because of the sophisticated weapons at our disposal."

He said the team led by the DPO used the newly acquired ABC armour carrier to prevent the robbers from entering the bank.

Also yesterday, the police killed another robber while attempting to attack a foreigner who lodged at a hotel in Shasha, a suburb of Lagos, just as another gang leader at Lagos Island identified as Ales Adeleke died of gun wounds in police

From Suleiman Mohammed,
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cell.

The gang led by Adeleke, the police said, operate mainly on Lagos Island, but were

Wednesday smashed by the Special Anti-robbery squad from the police headquarters, Area "A" Command, Lagos, following reports by members of the Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC).

Militants kidnap seven Chinese in Bayelsa

Gunmen stormed the local offices of a major Chinese oil company in Niger Delta yesterday, abducting seven Chinese employees and stealing a large amount of cash, police said.

One of the assailants died in the raid on the finance offices of the government-owned Chinese National Petroleum Co. Bayelsa, state Police Commissioner, Hafiz Ringim, said. Two Chinese employees escaped the attack, Ringim added.

In Beijing, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said it is looking into the attack. Company officials could not be reached for comments.

Some 100 hostages have been seized in a year of increased violence in Nigeria, the largest producer of oil in Africa and a major exporter to the U.S. Hostages are generally released unharmed after a ransom is paid, although casualties have occurred during gunbattles between the attackers and security forces.

Despite the vast energy stores lying beneath

southern Nigeria's soil, the region's people remain desperately poor. Many blame their plight on corruption and mismanagement by the federal government.

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), which seeks greater control of oil revenues and the release of two regional leaders imprisoned on corruption or treason charges, have launched many of the raids and abductions. The violence has cut Nigeria's usual 2.5 million barrel per day crude production by nearly a quarter.

But most of the kidnappings in recent weeks haven't been claimed by the group which said it was not behind Thursday's attack. Along with the Chinese, about two dozen Filipinos, two Italians, one Briton, one American and a Lebanese are still being held.

China is boosting ties with Nigeria and across Africa, seeking to secure energy and other resources for its booming economy.