

Stampede as robbers raid Kano market

Written by Hassan A Karofi, Kano

Friday, 14 September 2007

Pandemonium broke out in the heart of Kano City late in the afternoon yesterday when a 13-man gang of armed robbers attacked the Abubakar Rimi Market in Kano, carting away millions of naira worth of jewelleries.

Four people were known to have died in the attack, among them a 10 year-old apple seller, two shop owners and another man who apparently had a heart attack as he fled the robbery scene. A policeman guarding the Union Homes premises along Murtala Muhammed Way was critically injured when the robbers fired at him as they fled with their loot.

Chairman of the traders' union youth wing Sadisu Sani told Daily Trust that the robbers came into the jewellery wing of the busy market at around 4 o'clock in the afternoon and launched an attack at 8 shops.

They carted away millions of Naira worth of jewelleries after shooting at some store owners as well as the mobile policemen guarding the wing.

"They came in group, all of them wearing caftans and they spoke in low

tones. Only one of them was wearing jeans and a shirt. Before we knew what was happening, they fired at the policemen on guard and shot into some of the shops," he said

Sadisu, who was shaking as he recounted the story, said the robbers then went directly into some select shops, among them shop number D188, D 288 and six others where they stole a bag full of jewellery. He said, "We tried to call the police after they attacked everybody killing some of our colleagues and critically injuring two policemen. They packed a full Ghana Must Go bag with jewelleries before they fired in the sky and left".

Another eye witness whose shop was also robbed, Alhaji Abubakar Yusuf, said one of robbers hit him with a gun when they entered his shop. They broke his glass cage and stole almost all his jewellery, he said.

Many people were injured in the ensuing stampede and the market was closed down immediately to avoid looting. Daily Trust learnt that within minutes of the robbers' strike, a detachment of policemen led by an armoured tank surrounded the market and quickly engaged the robbers in a gun battle. The robbers then beat a retreat and were pursued by the police through the crowded Sabon Gari area.

The state deputy commissioner of police, Sule Abba, confirmed the robbery and told newsmen that the police had given the robbers a hard fight. He said, "Immediately we received a distress call from the market, we ordered our men to move in and foil the robbery. We recovered two vehicles belonging to the robbers, a Camry V6 with registration number AA 347 EFR and another Toyota with registration number EW 724 EKY.

The deputy police commissioner of police also said that the police recovered some of the jewelleries stolen after they fought with the robbers for hours. The police also recovered 5 more vehicles from the robbers during the fight that lasted over 3 hours. Most of the vehicles recovered were stolen from motorists as the robbers ran away from the pursuing policemen.

The police deputy commissioner said there was no confirmation of any death, but that two policemen were injured when the vehicle in which they were pursuing the robbers was fired at. They are receiving treatment at the hospital, he said. The deputy commissioner then ordered for an immediate search by patrol vehicles across the state, as according to him, some of the robbers were hit by the police as evidenced by the pool of blood in their recovered vehicle.

He said, "We want to appeal also to the public and hospitals to report any body who calls with bullet injuries, as we believe some of them were injured in the fight with the police. We were not able to arrest any of the robbers, but we believe since they are injured, it is a matter of time before they will be arrested".



Clerk of the National Assembly Alhaji Nasir Ibrahim Arab (right) and his deputy Yemi Ogunyomi at the sitting of the ad-hoc committee investigating the contracts for the upgrading of Speaker and Deputy Speaker's houses during the committee's public hearing at the National Assembly, Abuja yesterday. Pic: Felix Onigbinde.

Yesterday's was the second time in two months when armed robbers targeted the Kano jewellery market in broad daylight. In June, one person was killed and over N200m worth of jewelleries stolen when some armed robbers attacked the Hajj camp market in Kano.

Also yesterday, armed robbers stormed the Texaco petrol filling station at Junction Road, Kaduna and stole an undisclosed sum of money. One fuel attendant was shot and critically wounded. He was rushed to the hospital, but his condition could not be ascertained as at press time.

Witnesses said the robbers, four in number, arrived the filling station at about 7.30pm in a Toyota Corolla car. After robbing the station, they abandoned the car they came in and snatched a car belonging to another customer. A mob later burnt the car abandoned by the robbers before police men arrived at the scene.

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I'm impressed with the prompt response by the police in this situation. My appeal is that government should look into issues of security and youth unemployment with all seriousness

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