

Controversy Trails Police Claim On Killed Robbers

FROM
SIMEON NWAKAUDU,
MAKURDI

FOR the third day, the Benue State Police Command had displayed remains of four slain suspected armed robbers on the court of its command headquarters, which it claimed its men killed in a joint mission with Ali Kwara, a self-styled robbery buster.

However, residents of Apir village, near Makurdi, have claimed that a police vehicle escorted the then arrested armed robbers and allegedly killed them on a deserted stretch of the lonely road, leading to the Federal Medical Centre, Apir.

A security man, who spoke with newsmen, said "We heard the gunshots and it baffled us. We rushed to the scene after the culvert, only to see some policemen carrying the corpses of four persons whom they claimed were armed robbers into the white pick up van. If the police insist on killing these persons, must it be in

this village?"

However, the Benue Police Command spokesman, Adesanya Jinadu denied knowledge of any killing by the police at Apir last Thursday.

But he re-stated that the four suspected armed robbers were killed after a shootout on Thursday, along the Zaki

Biam — Taraba Foad.

The official said that Ali Kwara and his team of policemen were on their way to Makurdi when they ran into the robbers operating along the route.

He said the fifth suspected robber was arrested and was still assisting the police with informa-

tion on the whereabouts of 12 missing police rifles snatched by gangs operating along that route.

Jinadu said the suspect had confessed that the gang was the same that attacked the convoy of the wife of Taraba State Governor, Mrs. Danbaba Sontai, recently.

VP Meets Bakers To Resolve Strike

FROM
MADU ONUORAH,
ABUJA

THE Presidency yesterday waded into the ongoing bakers' strike as the Vice President, Goodluck Jonathan met with the leadership of the Master Bakers Association of Nigeria and the Flour Millers Association of Nigeria on behalf of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua.

Jonathan, who cited the negative effects of the strike on food security in Nigeria, promised that "the Federal Government will look into all the issues raised by both organisations in a bid to find an enduring solution

to the problems causing by the rise in prices of staples."

The Vice President told the bakers that the President was concerned that their protest would push the price of staple foods beyond the reach of Nigerians.

"Government is concerned when those that produce daily bread for the people decide to go on strike, as bread is daily staple for most families in Nigeria," Jonathan said.

He therefore urged the master bakers and flour millers to put the interest of Nigerians at heart and find ways to make their end product available to citizens.

The Vice President of

the Flour Millers Association of Nigeria, Mr. Ben Elizuenlen explained that the price of wheat flour has gone up not only in Nigeria, but in other parts of the globe due to bad weather in key grain growing areas, such as Canada and parts of Europe, thus limiting supplies of the commodity.

Calling on the Federal Government to review VAT and import duties on imported wheat flour in order to bring down prices, he noted that past efforts at replacing wheat with cassava and maize failed because both products lack the essential protein, called gluten, which gives wheat stay-