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Wednesday, February 13, 2008

Robbers kill 11 in bank raid, seize N15m

From Leo Sobechi, Abakaliki

A TEN-MAN robbery gang yesterday stormed a branch of a new generation bank in Afikpo, Ebonyi State, where they collected more than N15 million and killed at least 11 persons.

According to an account of the incident, the robbers who arrived at the bank at about 10.30 a.m. in two V-C Land Cruiser Sports Utility Vans (SUV), started shooting sporadically, thus scaring customers and passersby away.

About 20 persons were alleged to have sustained serious injuries in the early morning operation that lasted for more than two hours.

Most of those wounded were students and teachers waiting to be attended to inside the bank.

One of the two ladies who was said to be among the 10-man robbery gang was reportedly behind the wheel. The police said details of the incident were still sketchy as at the time of filing this report.

Sources said that yesterday's robbery was the third attack on the bank within five months.

On-lookers were dazed by the brazen display by the robbers who threw wads of naira notes at pupils who struggled for the money with childish ecstasy.

A team led by the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) for Afikpo, Mr. Jonathan Nnamdi, was said to have arrived at the scene at 12.30 p.m., 30 minutes after the robbery to the consternation of the people as the divisional headquarters was just a stone's throw from the bank.

Two of the robbers were masked, thus suggesting that the duo may be indigenes of the area, who probably got intelligence that huge sums of money, intended for payment of teachers' salaries, were lodged in the bank the previous day.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) of the state command, ASP Nudam Frederick, who confirmed the incident, refused to give details, saying he was yet to be briefed on it.

However, he declared that the command had swung into action to apprehend the hoodlums.

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