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Thursday, August 06, 2009

**12 feared killed in bank robbery, crash***From Iyabo Lawal (Ibadan) and Bodunrin Beckley, (Keffi)*

**I**T was a black day in Ogbomoso yesterday as gunmen invaded three commercial banks in the city and unleashed mayhem on officials, customers and passers-by.

At the end of the operation, which took place simultaneously in the affected financial institutions, seven persons, including three of the robbers were killed, while others sustained various degrees of injuries.

Also, five persons were yesterday feared killed in a ghastly accident at Gidan Waje village on Keffi-Akwanga road in Nasarawa State.

The robbers, according to sources had arrived at the Apake area of Ogbomoso where the banks are located in five vehicles, including three 18-seater passenger buses, a Toyota Camry and another KIA car, armed with sophisticated weapons. They were said to number about 60.

On their arrival, the gun-wielding robbers took position in the three banks after overpowering the security men stationed within the banks' premises.

While the shoot-out lasted, a cleaner and a top official of one of the banks were shot dead. Three of the robbers also died in the process.

Two persons were hit by stray bullets, while the robbers were trying to escape as they shot sporadically into the air, causing pandemonium in the city.

A police patrol van, which was cited by the robbers while trying to find an escape route was also not spared as it was riddled with bullets, though it could not be ascertained whether anyone was injured in the process.

The development forced other banks in the city to hurriedly close for business while traders and markets also hurriedly locked their stalls.

Commissioner of Police, Baba Bolanta, led a special rescue team to Ogbomoso while mobile policemen and an Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) were immediately deployed to the town.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Bisi Okuwobi, who expressed sadness over the incident, appealed to well meaning Nigerians to support the police in the area of

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equipment, saying if an APC was stationed in Ogbomoso, the robbers would not have had a field day.

Those feared killed in the auto crash involving three vehicles, include the chairman of the Senior Staff Association (SSANU) at the Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Bala Angbashim, his wife and son.

Another occupant of the third vehicle was badly wounded and had to be rushed to the Federal Medical Centre, Keffi by men of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC).

Commander of the Road Safety Unit in Keffi, Solomon Agure, told The Guardian that the mishap occurred when one of the vehicles tried to overtake and in the process hit an incoming vehicle.

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