

Robbers Raid Seven Banks, Kill Nine In Lagos

By Victor Ebimomi and Femi Ogbonnikan (Lagos)

Armed men on Wednesday invaded Alaba International Market, Ojo, Lagos State, robbing five banks and killing no fewer than six persons.

The operation, which took place at about midnight lasted till around 6.20 a.m., with the robbers carting away millions of Naira from the banks just as they destroyed the interior of one of the banks where they could not get money. Marks of heavy hammer blows were noticed on the doors of some of the affected banks.

The robbers who were armed to the teeth were said to have come to the area in four vehicles, including a jeep.

They allegedly shot sporadically into the air while the operations lasted resulting in a stampede by the early morning commuters and motorists, some of who were killed in the process.

Daily Independent saw a Carina salon car bearing registration number CQ 600 AAA (Lagos) with its front and back windscreen shattered by bullets. The owner was reportedly shot dead while trying to escape from the scene in his vehicle.

Also at the scene was a Molue painted with Lagos yellow with registration number as XE 825

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KTU. It had almost disintegrated as it had somersaulted when it mistakenly climbed a heap of gravel on the roadside in a desperate attempt to escape from the scene. Some of the occupants were said to have died while others sustained various degrees of injury. The molue is causing a serious hold-up in the area as it is lying across the road.

Similarly, a green bus with registration XE 263 FGE also ran into a nearby building while trying to escape. The driver was said to have sustained serious injuries.

"I saw three corpses with my eyes this morning and I gathered that some people also died in the molue," an Okada rider who pleaded anonymity said.

Some residents of Olojo Drive stated that the staccato of the bullets created panic.

At 12.30 p.m., when Daily Independent left the scene, the market was already bubbling with activities but traders could still be seen in groups discussing the incident.

It was however gathered that policemen came to the scene in the morning some minutes after

7.00 a.m. when the criminals had left the scene but allegedly still managed to arrest some "innocent" people.

In a similar vein, armed bandits shifted their operations to the outskirts of Lagos State on Wednesday killing three persons during a raid on a bank.

Earlier, on Tuesday afternoon, a sum of N16 million was allegedly stolen from another bank in a suburb of Lagos.

Informed sources said that the robbers, numbering more than 60 and armed with sophisticated weapons and house breaking implements, besieged a branch office of a bank opposite Benson Bus-stop Lagos Road, Ikorodu between 1.00 a.m. and 3.00 a.m. on Wednesday.

On arrival, it was learnt that the bandits riddled the entire bank building with bullets before gaining entry into the banking hall. An armed mobile policeman, and two night guards on duty at the bank were not spared from the indiscriminate shooting. The three men died on the spot.

Though sources disclosed that the operation did not succeed Daily Independent however, learnt that the

robbers made away with a substantial amount of money, though the incident is yet to be ascertained.

Also, an officer explained that anti-robbery operatives attached to Igbogbo road Divisional Headquarters, Ikorodu, could not respond to distress call when the bandits arrived, because, according to him, the calibre of police weapons could not match the superior firepower of the robbers.

Similarly, a gang of armed robbers attacked a branch office of another bank situated at Ijede town, Ikorodu, at around 1.00 p.m. on Tuesday.

It was gathered that no sooner had a bullion van had brought in some cash than the robbers struck. No life was lost as a result of the incident, but an amount conservatively put at N16 million was allegedly stolen from the bank's vault.

Efforts to reach the Lagos State Police Command Spokesman, Mr. Olubode Ojajuni, Superintendent of Police, to clarify the reports proved unsuccessful, as he was said to be away for an official assignment.