

Gunmen Kill Lebanese, Three Policemen In Port Harcourt

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Unidentified gunmen on Friday morning forced themselves into the private residence of a Lebanese businessman and shot him dead before the police could trace the location in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital.

Eyewitnesses said the gunmen, who raided the house on Ogbonda Street in Ogbunabali area of Port Harcourt around 2.30a.m, used explosives to break into the foreigner's home.

A neighbour, who did not want to be named, said the gunmen were about 20 in number

and were clad in military fatigues.

"We locked ourselves inside when we started hearing the shootings in the neighbourhood. Before long, the attackers had broken into the duplex and shot the man at close range," one of the neighbours told *Saturday Inde-*

pendent.

Although the state Police Commissioner, Mr Felix Ogbaudu, confirmed the death of the Lebanese, the command was yet to release his name at the time of this report.

Ogbaudu said the attack could have been triggered off by

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a failed kidnap bid, armed robbery or assassination.

The commissioner, however, identified the slain Lebanese as a businessman engaged in the production and distribution of furniture in Nigeria.

A police source said that the unidentified gunmen also wounded his relative after collecting some unspecified amount of money from him.

Before the Lebanese was killed, some armed men had stormed the Elekahia Police Station near the Liberation Stadium in Port Harcourt and shot three policemen on duty.

The armed men might have gone to the station to free two cripples who were arrested with gun last Monday.

The two cripples, Musa and Mohammed, were taken to the police station for interrogation and later transferred to another police station after their confessional statements.

However, the gunmen opened fire on the station around midnight forcing some

policemen to scamper for safety.

Although three cops were feared killed, the police boss said his men repelled the attackers and that the men were only injured.

It will be recalled that armed men bombed the Elelenwo and Mini Okoro police stations on the eve of the gubernatorial election in Rivers State on April 14, 2007.

The Divisional Crime Officer for Mini Okoro and six other policemen were killed in the raids and unspecified arms and ammunition carted away by the invaders.

On July 3, the Inspector General of Police, Mr Mike Okiro, admonished officers and men of the force to always be on the alert to repel attackers in their stations.

He asked them to use maximum force on any individual or group that attempts to attack them or their barracks.

The killing is coming barely a week after militants in Rivers State signed an accord and pledged not to carry out further attacks on individuals and groups.