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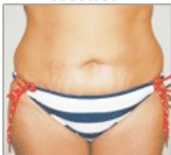
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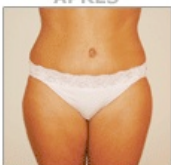
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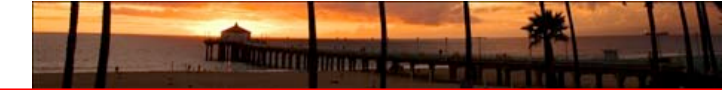
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Daily Independent (Lagos)

Nigeria: Robbers On Rampage in Akure, Kill Five, Raid Banks

Yemi Akintomide

17 June 2010

Akure — A gang of 15 armed robbers threw the streets of Akure into a theatre of war on Thursday, in a commando style operation: it killed five people, and raided four banks.

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The operation lasted several hours from 10 a.m. on the popular Oba Adesida Road, in the heart of the city, leaving several people with gunshot wounds from stray bullets fired by criminals armed to the teeth with sophisticated weapons.

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Pandemonium broke out in the crowded Oja Oba and its environs, including the busy Olukayode Shopping Mall, Arowolo Shopping Arcade, Oke-ljebu junction, and the entire business axis.

Three of the deceased fell to the bullets fired sporadically by the thieves after they robbed the banks. Two were middle aged women; one of them who carried her baby to the bank was left in her pool of blood.

The robbers fired gun shots along their escape route and killed another two people. They attempted to rob another bank but were resisted by angry youths who confronted them.

For hours, the robbers unleashed terror on the neighbourhood, with several rounds of bullets fired into the air and on buildings on Oba Adesida Road while raiding the banks.

A female member of the gang stood on the newly constructed meridian on the dual carriage way, dishing out instructions to others and firing gun shots to scare away onlookers.

Policemen at a nearby police station could not help the situation. They hurriedly left their duty posts to save their heads. Some replaced their police uniforms with mufti clothes to escape from the vicinity.

Members of the Special Security Joint Task Force, put together by the Ondo State Government to maintain peace in Akure, abandoned their Toyota Hilux patrol van by the road side.

The officers, comprising soldiers, anti-riot and mobile policemen, all fled. Eyewitness account said the robbers simultaneously raided two banks on the crowded Ilemo Street.

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They used dynamite to blow up the bullet proof door in one of the banks to gain access to the banking hall, where they ordered both the staff and customers to lie down before heading for the vault.

As this operation was going on, the robbers - who divided themselves into two groups - were also operating in the other bank, whose security door they blew up with gun shots.

Thirty minutes after they left, a team of mobile policemen and regular ones arrived at the scene. This infuriated the crowd which had gathered to sympathise with the victims.

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perdu plus de
16 kilos de graisse
 du ventre en
 seulement
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 de régime.

They hurled stones at the policemen, blaming them for not responding to the distress call in time. In response to the incident, the state government summoned an emergency meeting of all the security organisations in the state.

Information Commissioner Ranti Akerele said the government would do everything to ensure that Akure is safe for everyone. He described the robbery as unfortunate and an infraction on the peace enjoyed in the state since the inception of the present administration.

A statement issued by Governor Segun Mimiko's Chief Press Secretary, Kolawole Olabisi, said the government is saddened by the deaths and the injuries received by innocent residents.

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He gave an assurance that the government would not fold its arms and watch the state turn into the operation ground of hoodlums. According to the statement, Mimiko cut short an official trip to Abuja, and on arrival back in Akure, summoned all security chiefs to an emergency meeting and gave them marching orders to track down the robbers.

He pledged that lives and property would be protected and that efforts are being made to prevent a recurrence of the incident. He appealed to the people to go about their lawful businesses and refrain from taking laws into their hands in their reaction.

Mimiko assured the people of security measures to guarantee the safety of lives and property in the state at all times. Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Adeniran Aremu, also assured that everything will be done to protect lives and property. He said the police are still pursuing the robbers to arrest them.

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