

Bloody day: 13 killed as robbers hit three states

- The casualties: Kaduna (seven), Benue (four), Lagos (two)
- Army intervenes in Kaduna. ■ Two policemen injured in Kwara

IT was bloody yesterday in some parts of the country.

Thirteen persons were killed and two policemen injured as robbers went on the rampage in Lagos, Benue, Kaduna and Kwara states.

Seven persons, among them a policeman, were

From Godwin Isenyo (Kaduna), Biodun Oyeleye (Ilorin), Jude Isiguzo and Olalana Owolabi (Lagos)

killed in Kaduna, four in Benue and two in Lagos.

Among those killed in Kaduna where soldiers were drafted in were students of the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria.

The robbers, who struck at a first generation bank opposite the ABU North gate, went away with millions of naira, it was learnt.

A policeman attached to the bank, the manager of a restaurant opposite the university, a commercial motorcyclist, a woman and two children were among

the victims.

A witness told *The Nation* that he was inside the banking hall with the manager when the heavily-armed robbers struck, ordering everybody to lie face down.

Another witness said that two of the robbers whose ages were put at 50 wore

long robes and stood in front of the bank, shooting to scare away people; others were busy in the bank.

The motorcyclist and a policeman attached to the bank were killed. The policeman, it was learnt, died instantly. The motorcyclist and his passenger, in an attempt to escape from the

scene, were shot; they died instantly.

The restaurant manager who came out to see what was going on was shot in the stomach. He died instantly.

A breakdown of law and order was averted when policemen who later ar-

Continued on page 2

Bloody day: 13 killed as robbers strike in three states

Continued from page 1

rived at the scene reportedly shot a student in the head. He was taken to the hospital.

Hoodlums attempted to cash in on the situation to cause chaos in Samaru, blocking the roads with bonfires. They hauled stones at students of the university.

A detachment of military men was later deployed to the area.

"I was standing with the bank manager, discussing when they came in, shouting: 'everybody lie down'. We immediately obeyed them and then they asked who the manager was, they took him and went to the vault, demanding the keys.

"He immediately called the girl who had the keys and they opened the safe and took the money inside it. At the time they came, the bullion van had just arrived and the money was being taken to the strong room. So, they in-

tercepted that money also and went away with it."

The Police in Zaria could not be reached for comments.

But in Benue State, some suspected robbers met their match in the police who killed four of them.

Parading the bodies of the suspected robbers, Commissioner of Police Ibiyinka Kayode said the gang attacked the wife of the Taraba State Governor recently. Two of them, he said were arrested. The four were killed during a gun duel with the police.

One of the suspected robbers confessed that his gang had killed many policemen on the Wukari-Zakibiam highway. They seized their arms and ammunition to carry out their operations, he said.

The suspect also shocked the police boss when he said sometime they got guns from police officers after paying N150,000 or N200,000.

In Lagos, robbers stormed

a bank at Ijeshatedo in the Mainland — two weeks after about 15 people were killed in a similar operation at Ketu-Mile 12.

The bandits arrived at Adeshina Street around noon while the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Mohammed Abubakar, and his officers were at their weekly parade of suspects at the Command Headquarters, Ikeja.

Eyewitnesses said the hoodlums took over the street, celebrating their loot for more than 50 minutes.

Policemen at the nearby, Ijesha Police Station were said to have locked themselves inside the station while the operation lasted.

More than 20 people were reported to have been wounded during the sporadic firing by the bandits who came by a bus and two cars.

In another incident, armed men invaded another first generation bank at Ikorodu at about the same time the Ijeshatedo

operation was going on.

Although nobody was reported killed, the hoodlums had a field day; they emptied the bank's vault.

Confirming the Ijeshatedo incident, police spokesman Olubode Ojajuni, a Superintendent of Police, told *The Nation* that the operation was foiled.

He said he could not comment on the Ikorodu incident because he had not been informed by the area commander.

In Ilorin, Kwara State, two policemen were injured and millions of naira carted away by robbers who struck at a bank in Omuaran, between Tuesday night and Wednesday morning.

A similar incident had taken place mid-July in Offa when robbers invaded a second generation bank, killed a police Sergeant and carted away millions of naira. Another police victim of the incident is in hospital.

The latest bank robbery

took place in Omu-Aran, but the attack in which the policemen were injured happened in Offa. A driver with a popular private school whose bus was first snatched for the robbery has been arrested on suspicion that he might be connected with the incident. This is the second time the bus has been snatched from the driver for a similar operation, it was alleged.

The Commissioner of Police, Alhaji Audu Abubakar and the Transition Implementation Chairman (TIC) of Irepodun Local Government, Alhaja Basirat Mohammed, confirmed the Omu-Aran incident.

The robbers, including a woman, were said to have first snatched the bus at Offa on Tuesday night. They went to Omu-Aran the following day where they forced the accountant of the bank to open the safe at gunpoint. The incident, which occurred at about 8.30 a.m, sent the com-

munity into a panic. The robbers were said to have abandoned the bus and fled in a car.

Audu said there was an exchange of fire between the police and the robbers who reportedly escaped because they had superior firepower. They were said to have destroyed the four tyres of the police truck during the exchange. Audu said the distress call got to the police late.

The police in Offa were said to have laid an ambush for the robbers following tips that they were returning through that route. A source, who pleaded for anonymity, said it was in the encounter that the robbers injured the two policemen. The encounter was said to have occurred on the Federal Polytechnic/Erin-Ile road. Two policemen were injured. One of them was reportedly taken to native doctors in Erin-Ile for the removal of the pellets believed to have been buried in his legs.