

Robbers hit banks in another bloody day

TWO policemen were feared killed yesterday in Lagos by robbers who stormed two banks in Ilupeju

In what seemed a replication of last Thursday's bloody experience in some major cities, two policemen and 10 civilians were in-

• Final year medical student, 11 others shot in Ibadan

jured in Ibadan where another bank raid occurred. It was bloody at the University College Hospital (UCH). Robbers stormed a first generation bank within the UCH premises,

in a 40-minute operation that left two policemen and 10 of the bank's customers lying in a pool of their own blood.

The injured persons were rushed to the UCH casualty

unit where doctors were battling all-day to save their lives.

Shot in the neck was a final year medical student. Eight others, including one member of the UCH security guards, Sikiru, were

said to have been seriously injured.

The student, Mr. Onilela Segun, who was said to have walked into the robbers, challenged one of them, a woman, who was shooting indiscriminately

into the air. She shot Sikiru in the neck.

It was gathered that the incident occurred around 12.40pm.

"All the customers within the bank's premises were asked to cooperate,

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after being confined to a secluded part of the banking hall.

The bank's vault was emptied, a customer who pleaded for anonymity, said. He was at the scene of the robbery.

Hospital sources said the chances of survival of the student and the policeman shot in the nose were very slim.

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Police Commissioner Ekpoudom Udom confirmed the incident, but he claimed that only one policeman was shot.

He blamed the bank's management for their failure to quickly alert the police on the robbers' presence, adding that the marauders had gone before his men were alerted.

"But I can assure you that we are trailing them; they will have no hiding place because we are going to get them in no distant time," the CP assured.

The hospital was thrown into pandemonium as visitors and patients scampered for safety when guns boomed. Many panic-stricken motorists rammed their vehicles into the ditch; Others collided with one another.

An afternoon downpour flushed off the grounds the thick blood-stains on the scene.

At the Casualty Unit of the hospital where majority of the victims were rushed to, some including policemen, were seen battling to stay alive.

One of the policemen was shot in the nose; another was shot in the left hand and chest.

According to eyewitnesses, the robbers walked

into the banking hall, unnoticed. Some of them, including the woman, mounted guard outside the premises.

The operation, said one of the victims who escaped with a bullet wound on the left leg, started just after the arrival of a bullion van at the bank.

He said the robbers may have been trailing the van.

Another eyewitness, who went to cash money when the incident happened, said: "It was a very fearful sight. This place was as if we were watching a rehearsal of a movie. They came in as if they wanted to do business with the bank. They were neatly dressed, one wore *agbada*. We were helpless when the one that put on *agbada* brought out a rifle buried under his *agbada*.

"Inside the bank, we were asked to surrender all our money and lie face

down. There was no shooting inside; all those injured were shot outside by the woman among the robbers."

Some of the victims of bullet shots who were bleeding profusely were said to have refused treatment at the hospital; they would prefer another hospital for fear that the robbers may stage a comeback.

Robbers simultaneously raided two branches of two new generation banks at the Anthony/Ilupeju axis of Ikorodu Road, Lagos Mainland. Two policemen were feared killed in the simultaneous operations.

The Nation learnt that the hoodlums stormed the area around 11 am, shooting their way into the banks which are close to each other.

Traffic literally came to halt as drivers swerved into culverts to escape from the hoodlums who shot into the

air to scare people.

Police deputy spokesman, Mr. Frank Mba, a deputy superintendent, denied that the incident was an attack on any bank and that any officer was killed.

According to him, robbers took over the Anthony area, dispossessing people of their belongings.

Mba said upon receiving a distress call, policemen were dispatched to the area to confront them.

As the robbers made to escape, they encountered a police patrol squad. The robbers, Mba said, opened fire on the unsuspecting policemen, injuring two of them.

The police, he said, returned fire. The gun duel lasted about 15 minutes.

Some of the robbers, Mba said, escaped with bullet wounds. Mba disclosed that though the shot policemen were alive, one of them was in a critical condition at an undisclosed hospital.