

Five killed as robbers storm Lagos bank

By Jude Isiguzo

ARMED robbers yesterday stormed the Alapere Ketu Lagos branch of a third generation bank, killing five persons and wounding 15 others.

The robbers, who defied the rain, blew up the bank's electronic door with explosives.

A woman, described as the branch manager, was shot on the chest and a 12-year-old boy, who came to the bank

with his mother was hit on the leg.

Residents said the police arrived on the scene two hours after the hoodlums had gone. A police station is said to be about 300 metres away from the scene.

The hoodlums, said to be more than 20, came in three vehicles and went straight to business. It was gathered that they took over Demurin

Street, which links Ketu to Alapere and shot sporadically into the air.

Eyewitnesses told our correspondent that when they got to the bank, they fired at the door, but it did not open. They then blew it open with explosives.

On entering the banking hall, they shot at the officials who wanted to stop them from gaining access to the vault.

In the process, the manager was shot on the chest, some workers and customers were also hit.

An undisclosed amount of money was alleged to have been stolen.

When *The Nation* visited the scene, bullet holes were seen on some buildings in the adjoining streets.

Some of the residents, who spoke to our correspondent, said that they had to lie down on the floor in their rooms to

avoid being hit.

They said no policeman was seen during the operation. Some policemen, they said, came about two hours after the robbers had left.

But Police spokesman Frank-Mba said the operation was foiled and that policemen responded immediately they received the distress call.

He said policemen chased the robbers to the waterside, but they escaped.