

Policeman dies as robbers steal millions in Akwa Ibom bank raid

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A police Sergeant died yesterday when 18 gunmen suspected to be robbers raided a branch of a major old generation bank on the Ibekwe Road, Ikot Abasi Urban in Akwa Ibom State.

A police rescue vehicle somersaulted on the way, killing the policeman in the process.

Other policemen were injured.

The robbers were said to have stormed the bank at 11:45am and stole an undisclosed amount of money.

Eyewitnesses said the robbers wore military camouflage and shot sporadically into the air to scare passersby and customers.

The operation reportedly lasted an hour with the robbers said to be undisturbed.

The robbers were said to have loaded money into a waiting vehicle outside the bank premises and sped off.

An Indian expatriate working with the National Integrated Power Project (NIPP), Mr. Zubayer, and two other bank workers were reportedly abducted.

But the police said they rescued them.

Men of the Nigerian Navy Ship (*NNS Jubilee*) in Ikot Abasi were said to have engaged the robbers in a gun battle.

But the hoodlums escaped through the Okopedi waterways.

Police spokesperson Cordelia Nwawe, an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), confirmed the incident to our correspondent.

She said no arrest had been made, but a heavy police artillery had been deployed in the town to tackle the robbers.

She said: "No arrest has been made. We lost a sergeant. He wasn't shot. There was an accident with our police vehicle on the way to do the rescue operation. Three persons, who were kidnapped by the robbers, have been rescued by the police. One white man and two workers of the bank have been rescue by the police.

"We lost the police sergeant because our vehicle somersaulted. Other injured police officers are in the hospital. Heavy artillery has been deployed in Ikot Abasi and the police are still combing the area to find the robbers."