

NEWS

Security operatives foil bank robbery in Abuja

•Kill one, arrest four

Ademola Adegbite | Abuja

A combined team of security operatives, on Saturday, foiled what would have been a major robbery operation, gunning down one suspected armed robber and arresting four others.

The robbers had invaded a branch of First Bank at Mpape area of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

The incident threw the entire area into confusion as both customers, who were at the Automated Teller Machines (ATM) to withdraw cash, and passers-by ran for dear life.

Eyewitnesses told *Sunday Tribune* that when the armed robbers arrived at the bank, they started shooting into the air to scare people away from the premises.

It was further gathered that shortly after gaining entry into the banking hall, the police and soldiers arrived the scene, a development that made the robbers remain inside the bank.

Sunday Tribune gathered that one of the robbers, who attempted to force his way out was shot, but retraced his steps back into the banking hall with gunshot injuries.

The security agents were later able to break into the banking hall and end the siege, smoking out and arresting four of the armed men and recovering the remains of the fifth.

One of the eyewitnesses, who did not want his name in print, said about two dozens of police special force arrived with a box of tear gas canisters to continue the process of smoking the robbers out of the bank.

"The arrested robbers said they got information from a bank worker who they claimed also opened the banking hall for them. The one that was killed among the robbers was gunned down by a mobile police officer. He had earlier disguised in a security guard uniform, having tied the security man, to pave the way for others to gain access into the bank.

"On sighting the tied guard, a mobile policeman freed the guard who ran to a nearby police station to seek for reinforcement.

"One of the rescued staff of the bank named the suspected robbers' accomplice as Ladi, who was said to have driven the thieves and the equipment used for the operation into the bank. The security guard, on sighting him (Ladi) at the gate, opened it, oblivious of the other occupants of the car.

"Ladi immediately excused himself, claiming to want to buy water, after which the robbers arrested the security guard and commenced operation," the source said.

We have restored normalcy—Police

Confirming the development in a statement made available to journalists in Abuja on Saturday, the FCT Police Command said four suspects were arrested and the Commissioner of Police had ordered thorough investigation.

According to a statement signed by the Deputy Police Public Relations Officer (DPPRO), Mariam Yusuf, an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), the command urged residents to remain calm, as normalcy had since been restored.

The command said police operatives were immediately

deployed to the scene and engaged the robbers, thereby foiling the attack on the bank with the backup of the military.

"Consequently, four suspects were arrested and one shot dead while trying to escape. The Commissioner of Police has ordered a discreet investigation of

the incident.

"The command urges residents to remain calm as normalcy has been restored, while reaffirming its commitment to nip crime in the bud and ensure safety in the FCT," she said.

Bank reassures customers, staff, commends security

Reacting to the development on Saturday, the Group Head, Marketing and Corporate Communications of First Bank, Folake Animuney, said the situation had been brought under control.

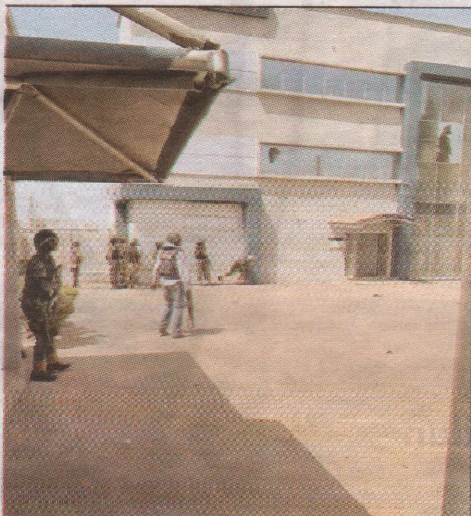
"We wish to inform everyone that the attempted robbery incident that hap-

pened at one of our branches in Abuja has been foiled. Customers and staff are unhurt and the suspects have been apprehended.

"The immediate response by the police and military is very commendable and we truly appreciate them for their doggedness and commitment," she said.



One of the robbery suspects being led by policemen after his arrest, on Saturday.



The bank premises



Another suspect arrested by the police.

Two men in police net for duping bank manager \$200,000 in Adamawa

Community in Ondo block road to protect innocent