

Panic as gunmen attack bullion van in Ibadan, kill two policemen, two civilians

.We'll continue to improve our response time using state apparatus —Makinde

From Oluwatoyin Malik and Wale Akinselure

THERE was panic at Idi-Ape area of Ibadan, the Oyo State capital on Thursday when armed robbers attacked a bullion van, killing two policemen and two civilians in the process.

Credible sources told the *Nigerian Tribune* that the bullion van with about five policemen, going round the branches of a new generation bank with cash, left its Dugbe office for Challenge, and thereafter to Iwo Road.

After leaving the last branch, the bullion van driver reportedly passed through the traffic light at Idi Ape junction and was on the fast lane at the turning to Carlton Gate Hotel when the armed men, numbering about 10 and wearing military camouflage, nose masks and bullet proof vests suddenly used a *Toyota Highlander* to block the van.

Before the arrival of the bullion van at the spot it was attacked, a source said the men were noticed prowling the area, but were thought to be security agents on an operation.

They were said to have

been armed with AK-47 rifles.

Another vehicle, an ash colour *Toyota Sienna*, was also used with the *Highlander* to cause further blockade, with the armed men spraying the bullion van's windscreen, tyres and side panels.

Thereafter, the armed men reportedly descended on the bullion van with axes, packing the cash, which had yet to be estimated, inside it.

The sergeant killed was said to be in a back-up van and was about to step out to confront the armed robbers when they rained bullets on him, killing him instantly. Two out of other three injured officers were rushed to the University College Hospital (UCH) while the third policeman was taken to a private hospital.

However, one of the two taken to the UCH later gave up the ghost.

Also, there were two casualties among the civilians, as one of them, a commercial motorcyclist was said to have been killed by the gunmen for watching their operation, while the other one was hit by stray bullet.

One of the policemen, an Inspector, however manoeuvred his way and escaped when he could not cope with the firepower.

It was further learnt that when the information was received, police operatives from Agodi Division, led by the Divisional Police Officer, had to walk on foot through a hidden path to get to scene of the incident, as there was traffic gridlock caused by the abandonment of vehicles by owners to escape being casualties.

They were said to have killed one of the armed robbers while some were believed to have escaped with multiple gunshot injuries.

Confirming the incident when contacted, the state Police Public Relations Officer, SP Adewale Osifeso said that two policemen and two civilians were responding to treatment.

The PPRO enjoined members of the public not to panic, as efforts were being made to track down and apprehend the criminal gang.

He also urged them to provide needed information to get the crime perpetrators apprehended.

It was gathered police officers and men from Agodi Area Command, Agodi Division, Monitoring Unit and other tactical teams had been on the search for the attackers.

Meanwhile, in his reaction to the robbery, Governor Seyi

Makinde has assured that his administration would continue to improve its response time to crimes and criminality using available apparatus at the state level.

Reacting via his verified social media handles, Makinde added that he had been informed that security agencies were already investigating the incident.

While commiserating with families of those who lost their lives in the robbery incident, Makinde expressed gratitude especially to police officers who continue to put their lives on line for the safety of the people.

Makinde said: "I received the sad news of the robbery attack at the Idi-Ape axis of Ibadan which resulted in death and injuries of residents.

"The security agencies are investigating the incident. I pray that the souls of the dead rest in peace and ask that we keep their families in our prayers.

"We are grateful to those who called 615 to report during the incident.

"We will continue to improve our response times using the apparatus available to us at the state level. We remain grateful to all security officers who continue to put their lives on the line for us."