

Policemen kill four robbery suspects

John Ameh, Onitsha

FOUR robbery suspects operating on motorcycles popularly known as *okada* have been killed by men of the Anambra State Police Command in different operations.

Investigations by our correspondent, on Thursday, revealed that the fourth suspect was reportedly shot on Wednesday in a rural community.

The state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Haruna John, who confirmed the incidents, explained that the incidents followed the response of his men to reported cases of suspects who disguised as commercial motorcyclists to attack innocent citizens.

"A good number of them are still on the run with gunshot wounds; we are on their trail and within the shortest time possible, the police will

flush them out," he said.

Only on Wednesday, three sales girls were killed in Onitsha when about seven robbery suspects invaded a beer depot on Court Road in the city.

A male member of staff, who tried to escape on sighting the attackers, was also shot. He reportedly died later the same day in a nearby hospital.

An eyewitness, who survived the robbery, said the suspects rode to the depot on motorcycles. Three of them rode on one motorcycle.

It will be recalled that at a meeting with members of the state Police Community Relations Committee in Awka a day earlier, some speakers asked John to regulate the operations of *okada* riders.

They informed him that,

in many rural communities, most the motorcycles used for commercial purposes were not registered, thus making it impossible for law enforcement agencies to identify the owners if they committed crime with them.

The commissioner told the gathering that he was working in conjunction with the state government to introduce the use of reflective vests and identification tags by genuine *okada* riders in the state.

"The Federal Road Safety Commission is also involved in this effort; operators here are not wearing crash helmets and metal protectors.

"We want to enforce the use of these things so that passengers can be guaranteed of their safety and personal security," the commissioner stated.