

Robbers invade Unity Bank, kill four policemen

**Rotimi Williams,
Kunle Adeyemi and
Olaekan Adetayo**

ABOUT 40 armed robbers on Monday further blighted the country's mourning mood by killing four policemen when they stormed the Abule-Egba branch of the Unity Bank, Lagos.

The deceased - Inspector Danladi Dashe; Sgt. Sylvester Ijegba; Sgt. Sabita Abdullahi; and Corporal Lawrence Abbah-were men of the Raider Squad of the State Criminal Investigation Department, Panty.

The State Police Command's Public Relations Officer, Mr. Olubode Ojajuni, confirmed the incident.

He claimed that some of the armed robbers were killed.

Unconfirmed reports said two civilians were also killed in the crossfire.

Our correspondents learnt that the heavily-armed men arrived at the bank premises, located on the Lagos-Abeokuta Expressway, at about 1am after operating at a nearby fast food restaurant.

After the security guards on duty at the bank had been overwhelmed, policemen at Oko-Oba were said to have sent a distress call to the Lagos State Police Command headquarters in Ikeja for reinforcement.

It was gathered that the reinforcement became necessary when men of the Oko-Oba and Elere police stations drafted to the scene could not face the robbers.

A source claimed that the

robbers might have intercepted the distress call and ambushed the reinforcement team.

The source said that about some metres to the robbery scene, the team from Panty saw an empty bus which partially obstructed the highway and stopped.

He said that while some of the policemen were alighting from one of their three vehicles, the bandits opened fire on them.

Residents of the adjoining streets were said to have been awake for almost two hours that the gun battle between the policemen and the bandits lasted.

Although some of the residents said the hoodlums stole millions of naira from the bank, police authorities claimed that the operation was unsuccessful.

As at 10am on Monday, welders were seen repairing the iron gates that the hoodlums broke during the operation while the bank was closed to customers.

The bank glass and the windscreens of some cars within the premises were also shattered.

One of the cars, a white Honda Civic marked CY 32 AAA was seen covered with a cloth.

A filling station beside the bank also did not open to customers.

Its attendants and some passers-by were seen discussing in groups.

Ojajuni, a deputy superintendent of police, said that 1,000 expended shells of

7.62mm calibre, gas cylinders and two assault rifles with ammunition were recovered from the scene.

Ojajuni, who claimed that policemen also injured some of the robbers, quoted witnesses as saying that the hoodlums escaped with the corpses of their dead colleagues.

He said the Commissioner of Police Mr. Emmanuel Adebayo, had ordered the SCID and the Monitoring Unit to comb the state and arrest anybody found with bullet wounds.

The unit was also mandated to as well as recover corpses with bullet wounds.

World body evades query on Okereke-Onyiuke

Continued from Page 1

kets on September 13, Okereke-Onyiuke said that her position in Transcorp would have been illegal but for a WFSE regulation which was amended in 1997.

She had said, "If the opportunity had come by 1997, this would not have happened. The World Federation of Stock Exchange has allowed that now. The federation allows directors of quoted companies to serve in other boards. There is no room for insider dealing because everything is done electronically."

"He (Obasanjo) wanted me to coordinate the men. I got the permission of the NSE Council to assume the chairmanship of Transcorp."

"Absolutely, there is nothing wrong for me to serve as the chairman of Transcorp. The names of members and promoters of the company have aroused the interest of investors."

The Paris, France-based WFSE responded to *THE PUNCH'S* several e-mail enquiries through its Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Peter Clifford, over a period of two

weeks.

The first of about five e-mails containing about 20 questions was sent to the WFSE on September 13. Initially, the organisation warmed up to the enquiries and asked to be given time to contact Okereke-Onyiuke for her own side of the story.

But it clammed up afterwards and evaded the questions.

In subsequent e-mails, the WFSE refused to respond to the same questions, which asked for the name, nature and other facts of the regulation that Okereke-Onyiuke had implied.

While it said that there was nothing 'intrinsically' wrong for Okereke-Onyiuke to be on a board of any company, the WSFE failed to say whether it was wrong for her to be a member of the board of directors of a company that is listed on the exchange which she heads.

The WFSE said, "There is no global rule for corporate governance. Local corporate law, market regulation and investor expectations are key components to corporate governance codes."

The mood at the command headquarters, GRA, Ikeja, was sombre on Monday as the news of the policemen's death filtered in.

Our correspondents gathered that the incident formed part of the discussion at the weekly briefing of the police commis-

sioner and his area commanders.

As at press time, the Assistant Inspector-General of Police in charge of Zone II, Mr. Adedayo Adeoye, was addressing all senior police officers and divisional police officers at the command's mess over the incident.

"There is nothing intrinsically wrong with directors of exchanges holding outside board positions."

"We do not collect statistics on this, but the practice does occur, particularly where the exchange operates subsidiaries in related financial services such as financial market data vending, clearing and settlement organisations, central depositories, information technology companies."

Contrary to the DG's claim, however, the WSFE said that electronic trading will not protect an Exchange from manipulation.

"Unfortunately, electronic trading does not protect a market from manipulation and abuse. However, it does provide the surveillance de-

partment of the exchange and the clearinghouse with information necessary to examine any suspicious activity, and quickly identify the owners of shares," it said.

The WFSE said its 57 members only agreed to abide by the rules which had evolved over the 45 years of its existence and to take part in periodic self-assessments.

"As you would expect, the WFE has a long experience in corporate governance, both as it affects listed companies and the exchanges themselves. The most recent WFE survey was published in 2006, and was centered on potential conflicts of interest at exchanges," the organisation said.

AC gets convention committee

Olusola Fabiyi, Abuja

THE Action Congress on Monday announced the setting up of a committee to the conduct its convention and congresses at the national, states and local government levels.

Those to handle the convention and congresses

Mrs. Blessing Elems.

The responsibilities will be carried out in the South-East by Mr. Ozor Onyia; Dr. Sam Eke; Chika Ebenene; Ms. Tina Akonobi; and Mr. Alex Eze.

Mr. Alex Babatunde Aribisala and Mr. Amos Sheyin are to handle the