

# Six banks robbed, eight killed in Lagos

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**W**EDNESDAY was a bloody day in some parts of Lagos as four separate incidents cost eight people their lives.

In three of the incidents, armed robbers attacked six banks, leaving six people dead.

The fourth was a shoot-out between some naval and prison officials in Kirikiri. Two died while many sustained injuries.

Four prison officials were feared kidnapped and their whereabouts were still unknown at press time.

Our correspondent learnt that three of the banks (names withheld) that were attacked by the armed robbers were situated at the Alaba International Market.

Two are in Ikorodu on the outskirts of Lagos while the last is located in Festac Town.

It was learnt that the robbers succeeded in gaining access to the vaults of three of the banks and made away with money yet to be estimated.

In the Alaba Market incident, the robbers, numbering about 20, reportedly drove to the scene in a Toyota Carina car and a Coaster bus.

They were said to have been armed with sophisticated weapons and house-breaking implements.

The robbers had already entered one of the banks and

emptied its vault before the arrival of the police.

As the police got to the scene, there ensued a gun battle which lasted for about one hour.

It was learnt that two of the robbers were killed while three others were arrested. The arrested ones gave their names as Michael Oghene, Chidi Orakule and Godwin Ibenegwu.

Our correspondent gathered that while the shootings were going on, a fully-loaded 911 Mercedes Benz bus popularly called "Molue" ran into the "battlefield."

Frightened by the sporadic shootings, the driver of the bus reportedly brought the vehicle to an abrupt halt, and fled.

The vehicle, which was not properly controlled for a halt, reportedly moved on and ran into heaps of gravel.

The bus somersaulted and as a result, four of the passengers died while many others sustained injuries.

Another account however said the dead persons were hit by stray bullets from the robbers.

All the bodies had been taken to the mortuary for preservation.

The spokesman for the Lagos State Police Command, Mr. Olubode Ojajuni, said that the Toyota car marked CQ 600 AAA and the Coaster bus marked BM 768 FJK were recovered from the scene.

Ojajuni said six oxygen cylinders, two iron hammers, two chisels, three hand gloves, one new AK-47 rifle with 10 rounds of ammunition in its magazine, were among the items found in the bus.

A source told our correspondent that the robbery in Ikorodu was intense that it became difficult for policemen to enter the arena.

It was learnt that the Kirikiri incident started at about 11.30am when a prison guard asked a naval rating who allegedly parked his car close to the gate of the Kirikiri Maximum Prison to leave the place, which is delineated as a security zone.

A source said that an argument between the two men degenerated into a fight and drew the attention of their colleagues in the area.

He said that as more naval men converged on the scene, the fight escalated and an exchange of gunshots began.

After the initial round of the fight, the naval men, who apparently felt slighted, allegedly went to mobilise and stormed the prison with a contingent of armed personnel.

Our source claimed that the shootings became more sporadic and deafening with the naval men firing into the prison and the prison guards responding.

Before the arrival of three patrol teams to the scene, the two people had been killed.

The Police Area Commander, Mr. Femi Oyeleye, who confirmed the clash, said he saw only one corpse at the scene.

He identified the deceased as Femi Oshunbamiro, a teacher at the Prison Primary School, Kirikiri.

Our correspondent learnt that a pistol with 10 rounds of ammunition was snatched from one of the prison guards.

At press time, the Assistant Inspector-General of Police in charge of Zone 11 Command, Lagos, Mr. Israel Ajao, and the Commissioner of Police, state command, Mr. Emmanuel Adebayo, were said to be making efforts to resolve the crisis.

The Director of Naval Information, Captain Obiora Medani, who spoke with our correspondent on the telephone, condemned the clash.

Medani said, "The incident is quite regrettable. We are making all efforts to resolve the matter. The naval authorities are taking measures to identify, apprehend and punish our men who responded to the shooting.

"At the same time, I can assure you that the prison authorities will do the same thing with their men."

Ojajuni said nobody had been arrested.