

Robbers, assassins seize Lagos, kill 7

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A GAIN, seven persons lost their lives in two separate shooting encounters in Lagos on Monday, as the metropolis came under siege of men of the underworld.

The first incident happened at the Flour Mills Plc in Apapa where a gang of armed robbers went berserk. In an attempt to rob the company, five persons were shot dead.

The second tragedy occurred in the early hours of Monday when a politician, Ibrahim Bakare, and another person, whose identity was not known at press time, were shot dead by unknown gunmen at Adeyemo Alakija junction near the Falomo Bridge.

Although the police confirmed that only three persons were killed in the Apapa encounter, our correspondent gathered from commercial motorcycle riders in the area that five persons were lying dead after the shootings.

The armed robbers, numbering about 15, reportedly besieged the company's

premises at about 7.30am when most business premises were opening for the day's operation.

It was not clear whether the robbers, who came in a black Volkswagen mini-bus, trailed a customer to the company or the mills was actually their target. But it was learnt that the robbers met police resistance after they entered the gate.

There was pandemonium as other business concerns, especially banks in the area, were put on the alert after the robbers fired the first round of gunshots to ease their way in.

According to an eyewitness, riot policemen attached to some of the banks responded and there ensued an exchange of gunfire.

As the "mini-battle" continued, distress calls were sent to the police and a detachment of anti-robbery policemen from Area 'B' Command was sent to the scene.

The shootings escalated on the arrival of the reinforcement and when the heat became too much, the robbers retreated and fled. None of them was either

killed or arrested.

A riot policeman who was reportedly shot was rushed to a hospital in a critical condition.

However, the company's management, on Monday, insisted that the robbers did not enter their premises.

The spokesman for the Police Public Relations Officer, Lagos State Police Command, Mr. Olubode Ojajuni, a superintendent of police, confirmed the death of three persons in the attack. He also said the robbers merely passed by the company.

Ojajuni said stray bullets probably hit the victims, who included a beggar, and their bodies had been taken away from the scene and deposited at a public mortuary.

In the second incident, Bakare, who, our correspondent gathered, was in his car with two other persons, was killed at about 2am.

It was not clear where the Peoples Democratic Party member was coming from, but the third occupant of the ash-colour 3 series BMW car, who escaped the assassins' bullets, allegedly said that the killers had

been trailing Bakare before the attack.

Nobody has been able to establish whether the killers were armed robbers or assassins, but it was learnt that the men opened fire on Bakare's car as it got to the Adeyemo Alakija junction.

The man and his companion were reportedly confirmed dead at a hospital they were taken to by some policemen from the Marine Police Station, where the incident was reported.

Bakare, a former secretary to the Eti-Osa Local Government Council, was said to be one of the arrowheads of the Senator Musiliu Obanikoro Campaign Organisation.

Ojajuni said the police had not come to any conclusion on the killings and would not say whether it was a robbery attack or an assassination.

"The report was made early this morning (Monday), and we have immediately commenced investigation. The car is still in our custody, and we are trying our best," the police spokesman said.