



# 14 killed in police, robbers gun duels

Other police teams from MOPOL 20 and 22, GRA, Ikeja, also joined their colleagues in the APC. The Commander, Area 'G' Command, Ogba, Mr. Mobolaji Odusanya, an assistant commissioner of police, led the teams to the scene.

Odusanya said the robbers scaled the fence in an attempt to escape from the police and ran in different directions.

When the police got to the scene, it was learnt that the robbers were packing their loot into a golf car, which they had earlier snatched.

A fierce gun battle ensued between the police and some of the robbers. It was learnt that another team of policemen pursued the other robbers who had disappeared into the neighbourhood.

One of the robbers allegedly jumped into a water tank where he hid himself with his AK-47 rifle.

Unfortunately for him, he had been sighted by a policeman when he entered the tank. Policemen later came to the tank and fired several gunshots into it.

The suspect's legs were shattered with bullets before he was bundled out of the tank and driven to the police headquarters in GRA, Ikeja.

In another attempt to escape, one of the robbers was said to have run into a nearby primary school and threw the premises into confusion when policemen pursued him into the compound.

Our correspondent learnt that members of the Oodua Peoples Congress in the area complemented the police's effort by giving the security men hints about the whereabouts of the fleeing robbers.

By 1pm, the first group of police team arrived at the command headquarters with one dead robber and two others who were arrested alive.

Subsequently, three other suspects were brought in dead, while three others came in with minor injuries.

Five AK-47 rifles, including one police rifle and another pump action gun, were recovered from the robbers.

A man, who was shot in the stomach and was later identified by a security man as an innocent person, was rushed to an undisclosed hospital.

One of the dead robbers was brought in naked but still had an amulet tied round his waist. Bullet had created a big hole in his skull.

The police headquarters immediately became a beehive of activities as the policemen involved in the operation were given a pat on the back by the commissioner.

Abubakar said, "Can you

see what these people (robbers) are capable of doing now? Imagine someone facing another person with these types of guns.

"These people are heartless. They even use police rifles. Our men actually gave them a big fight. The robbers got the money but we recovered everything from them."

In Enugu, the policemen were on patrol duty at Ihube junction on Okigwe-Enugu Expressway on Thursday morning when they encountered robbers who had laid ambush for them. The robbers killed all the four occupants of the vehicle.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Linus Nwaiwu, who confirmed the development to our correspondent, said that the

robbers sprayed the vehicle in which the policemen were patrolling, with bullets killing all of them. Their AK-47 rifles were also taken away.

In a related development, daredevil armed robbers stormed a branch of the First Bank Nigeria Limited at Amaraku junction, Isiala/Mbano Local Government Area and carted away an undisclosed amount of money.

Our correspondent gathered that the robbers gained entry into the bank after overpowering the security men and made away with money in seven "Ghana must go" bags.

Nwaiwu confirmed the robbery but could not give details of the incident as he was not in his office.

The Enugu-Onitsha Expressway incident occurred

around the Umumba end of the expressway, a known black spot for robbery.

The robbers were said to have set one of the bullion vans ablaze when they could not break its safe while they made away with an unknown amount of money from the other one.

The men also shot a petrol station attendant who refused to dispense fuel to them some kilometres from the robbery scene.

The bullion vans were said to have left Enugu for Awka, Anambra State capital, when they were intercepted by the heavily armed robbers who were reportedly dressed in Army and police uniforms.

It was learnt that the robbers, who were in three

Mitsubishi buses, trailed the bullion vans to Umumba and attacked the occupants.

The rampaging bandits also attacked policemen at a checkpoint where they killed two officers and wounded others around Achi town, on Old Onitsha Road.

The Enugu State Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Mike Abattam, who confirmed the incident on Thursday added that one of the robbers was arrested. He added that detectives were on the trail of the others.

He said that two of the vehicles used by the robbers had been recovered by policemen who gave the robbers "a hot chase."

## NIPP: Abdulsalami's firm got N13.2bn contract

John Ameh, Abuja

THE House of Representatives Committee on Power and Steel on Thursday was stunned when it heard that a firm, chaired by the former Head of State, Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, won a power contract and was paid N13.2bn but allegedly did only a minimal per cent of the work.

The firm, ENEGO Nigeria Limited, was awarded the contract for the 330KV Uwu-Aji-New Haven-Ikote-Ekpene Transmission Line in the sum of N19.4bn.

Also, former President Olusegun Obasanjo was accused of superintending over many. National Independent Power Projects and approved payments for them without input from the Ministry of Energy.

The ENEGO project has a completion date of March 31, 2009 but the firm has so far done 20 per cent of the work after collecting N13.2bn.

The firm claimed to have been registered in 1991, but investigations the panel conducted at the Corporate Affairs Commission showed that ENEGO did not exist in CAC's records.

Other members of the board of ENEGO are Messrs Hamza Ibrahim, Felix Oshinowo, and David Oyeleye.

Abubakar became the chairman of the firm in 2000.

The project consultant, Mr. Thomas Lambert, an Austrian, also collected N501m out of the contract sum of N720.1m.

He, however, could not assess the performance of ENEGO on the job, saying that he had not been paid enough money.

His response angered the panel's chairman, Mr. Ndudi Elumelu, who retorted,

"What are you saying? You collected N501m of Nigerians' money for a contract of N720.1m and you are saying that you have not been paid?"

"Is it the difference of N218m that will stop you from doing the work? Then, take all the money and go with it to your country."

Another firm that won a controversial contract was Pivot Engineering Limited, chaired by Oba Otudeko, Chairman of Honeywell Group.

It was awarded the contract for the upgrading of three substations in Lekki and Ajah areas of Lagos in the sum of N12.9bn.

It was paid N7.9bn upfront, but the NIPP management rated the job done on the stations as "less than five per cent."

Otudeko's wife, Wole Adetoye, and one, Sera Obafemi were also mentioned as members of the board of the firm.

The same firm also won the contract for the Benin-Agbor-Asaba-Nkalagu Transmission Line in the sum of N4.8bn.

Although the Managing Director of the firm, Mr. David MacBride, admitted receiving over N3bn out of the total contract sum, the panel found out that the clearing of the site had not been done.

The contract, with a completion time of 13 months, was signed on March 3, 2006, while N3.6bn was paid to the firm on July 21, 2006.

The Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Energy, Dr. Abdullahi Aliyu, on Thursday testified on oath before the House committee.

He said that the ministry was sidelined in the handling of the contracts, while as the accounting officer, the permanent secretary had no knowledge of how the contracts were awarded and

paid for.

The permanent secretary also stunned the committee when he disclosed that none of the contracts went through the ministry's tenders' board.

He spoke at the third day of the public hearing on the \$16bn the administration of Obasanjo allegedly spent on the power sector between 1999 and 2007.

According to Aliyu, the paper works for the contracts started from the office of the former Minister of Energy (now Governor of Cross River State), Senator Liyel Imoke, who passed them to the Due Process Office.

From the Due Process Office, Aliyu said that the documents went for presidential approval.

He also alleged that because of the way the contracts were handled, there were contractors who did not deserve to be paid but were paid, while those contracted to supervise the jobs were not paid.

For instance, Aliyu stated that many consultants were not paid, resulting in a situation where some contractors pocketed money and did no job.

Aliyu said, "There were payments that were made that were not supposed to be made."

"There are no records of payment for any NIPP at the ministry; the projects were done by the presidential committee."

"They felt that the money they were using (Excess Crude Fund) belonged to the three tiers of government; so our input was not important."

"None of the NIPP passed through the tenders' board; they passed from the minister to the Due Process Office and then to Mr. President."

The permanent secretary noted that following the exit of

Obasanjo from office, the ministry set up several task forces to look into the problems associated with the projects.

When Elumelu asked Aliyu to name the members of the presidential committee, he declined. He said that the right person to do it was the Managing Director of the NIPP, Mr. James Olotu.

Olotu explained to the panel that there were two committees that handled the projects, both reporting to Obasanjo.

He said the main committee was the Presidential Committee on the NIPP, while a lower committee was the steering committee.

He listed the members of the main committee as former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar; Imoke; former Finance Minister, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala; former Group Managing Director, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, Mr. Funsho Kupolokun; and the Special Adviser to the President on Energy, Mr. Joseph Makoju.

Others were nine governors from the oil-producing states and Dr. Seke Shomolu.

"For reasons I do not know, the former Vice-President (Atiku) stopped attending the meetings of the committee."

"The governors also stopped attending; so, in their absence, Imoke was presiding and he reported to the President."

Olotu stated that the steering committee was chaired by Imoke and had Makoju, Shomolu, Kupolokun and others he said he could not remember.

"So, impliedly, the President (Obasanjo) approved the lists of the members and approved all the projects of the NIPP," he said.