

Uduaghan escapes death by a whisker

Sola Adebayo, Warri

• One killed, others injured

DELTA State Governor, Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan, escaped death by whiskers on Thursday as his convoy ran into an ambush by bandits on Benin-Warri highway at Oghara, the headquarters of Ethiope West Local Government Area of the state.

However, the driver of his aide-de-camp was killed in a gun duel between the policemen attached to the governor and the hoodlums.

The ADC to the governor, Mr. Chris Ifeayichukwu Eza, and his orderly were also un-

lucky as they were shot on the leg in the gun battle.

Government House sources said Eza and his orderly were instantly rushed to an undisclosed private hospital for urgent medical attention.

Police sources stated that unspecified number of other road users and passers-by were killed in the exchange of gunfire. The extent of casualty on the side of the bandits could not be ascertained by our sources.

The police sources added

that one of the Sport Utility Vehicles in the convoy of the governor was riddled with bullets.

But the governor, who was seated in the SUV directly behind the vehicle occupied by his ADC, escaped unhurt in the encounter.

Police sources said Uduaghan departed for Warri from Benin to watch the much-publicised ceremonial football match organised by the state government in honour of the retiring celebrated footballer, Mr. Austin Jay-Jay Okocha,

before the bloody encounter with the bandits.

However, the governor made it to Warri City Stadium to honour the soccer star despite the ugly incident.

It was gathered that the marauders, who blocked the highway with a trailer, were robbing a bullion van when the convoy of the governor arrived the scene at 12:30pm.

Police sources added that the robbers ignored the siren-blaring convoy of the governor as they continued their illicit operation.

Investigation by our correspondent showed that the security operatives in Uduaghan's team, who were probably infuriated by the effrontery of the bandits jumped out of their vehicles and confronted them.

Sources said the hoodlums, confident of the sophistication of their weapons, including machine guns, AK 47 and AK49 rifles returned fires with the security operatives.

A reliable police source said, "The robbers barricaded the highway at Oghara at about 12:30pm today (Thursday) with a trailer. They held traffic and robbed a number of road users. They were working on a bullion van, parking money from the bullion van when the Governor Uduaghan's convoy arrived at the scene.

"The governor's team probably thought that the robbers would respect constituted authorities as the convoy broke through the barricades. But the robbers were undeterred as they continued the operation even when they heard the sirens heralding that a big man was in the vicinity."

