

Robbers kill schoolboy, injure six others in Lagos bank raid

Armed robbers on Friday attacked Royal Trust Microfinance Bank in Iju Ishaga, a suburb of Lagos, killing a secondary school boy and injuring six others.

It was the first robbery attack on a financial institution in Lagos State in 2009. The attack came barely 24 hours after the Lagos State Commissioner of Police in the state, Mr. Marvel Akpoyibo, declared Lagos State unsafe for criminals.

It was gathered that the attack was the third since the bank was established. According to an eyewitness, the 14 robbers arrived at the bank in two Sport Utility Vehicles and a V-boot Mercedes Benz car around noon.

The robbers, who had no problem gaining entrance into the bank, fired many

Ayodele Ale and Sesan Olufowobi

shots into the air to scare passers-by and motorists. One of the bank's customers, who witnessed the raid, said, "I believe some of them who pretended to be customers had entered the bank before they started the shooting. The roads were deserted as some of them also positioned themselves in front of the bank. I had to lie down inside one of the shops at the front of the bank."

The bandits eventually gained entrance into the banking hall and directed cashiers and customers to lie on the floor. An official of the bank, who did not want to be identified, said, "We ran into one of the rooms and locked ourselves there. The armed robbers forced the

door open and asked for the person with the key to the vault. They shouted, 'Where is Henry? Where is Henry?' I think it was when they thought that the bank officials did not want to cooperate with them that they started shooting at the people inside the room."

It was gathered that six persons, including two bank

officials and four customers, were shot in the process, while an undisclosed amount of money was stolen by the robbers. As the robbers fled the scene, a detachment of policemen from Area G Command, Ogba led by the Commander, Mr. Bolaji Odesanya, and soldiers attached to the anti-

robbery military patrol codenamed "OP MESSA," confronted them.

The bandits, however, escaped through Agbado Crossing road, shooting at shops. In the ensuing confusion, an unidentified schoolboy was shot dead while some other people were also injured.

The injured were taken to Vital Medical Centre located directly opposite the bank for treatment. The corpse of the boy was said to have been taken away by the police.

With the police in hot pursuit, our correspondent gathered that the bandits tried to burn the Mercedes car, but according to a policeman, "we resisted it and recovered the vehicle."

The Mercedes car with registration number Lagos VB 876 KSF, sky blue, was taken to Area G headquarters. Odesanya declined comment when approached by *Saturday Punch*.

But the spokesman of the state police command, Mr. Frank Mba, who said policemen raced to the scene as soon as they received a distress call, expressed optimism that the bandits would soon be caught.

He said, "For them to attempt to burn down the Benz while they were being pursued suggested that the vehicle might give us a clue to their identity."

Reps capture N350bn unspent funds in 2009 budget

The House of Representatives said on Friday that N350 billion had been captured in this year's budget as unspent funds from last year's budget.

It also stated that oil revenues for 2009 were still underestimated as an additional N300 billion was expected. Crude oil revenue projection in the 2009 budget was put at about N1.66 trillion. The Chairman of the House Committee on Finance Mr.

John Ameh, Abuja

of increasing uncertainty in the industry's prospect this year. As at Thursday, a barrel of crude oil still averaged \$34.9, while the country's daily production output dropped to around 1.9m barrel owing to the restiveness in the Niger Delta region.

According to oil industry experts, the production output may still decrease to about 1.7mbpd in February in keeping with the December 16, 2008, ...



•Mr. Emmanuel Terhemba Laha of PUNCH Newspapers and his wife, former Miss Milliam Mngusonun Biti, during their wedding at the N.K.S.T Church, Ojo, Lagos...on December 13, 2008.