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## Six policemen, two others killed in robbery attacks

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There was bloodbath in Edo, Ogun and Akwa Ibom states on Wednesday as armed robbers and cult members unleashed terror on residents.



Mike Okiro

In Benin, Edo State, armed robbers killed six policemen and wounded two others in two separate attacks, while in Abeokuta, Ogun State, a woman lost her life to another gang of bandits.

The incident in Akwa Ibom saw a driver attached to the state's Task Force on Environment killed by cult members allegedly hired by some traders in the Uyo Main Market.

One of our correspondents learnt that the two robbery incidents in Benin took place along the Sapele-Benin Road and the Benin-Agbor Road.

It was gathered that the robbers operating along Benin-Agbor Road shot dead the Divisional Police Officer in charge of Ikpoba Hill and four other officers.

A police source said the policemen had raced to the road following a distress call that some robbers were attacking a United Bank for Africa's bullion van.

He said that the robbers sprayed their patrol vehicle, killing all of the policemen as they approached the scene.

The robbers were also said to have taken undisclosed number of arms and ammunition from the dead policemen before escaping.

The Police Public Relations Officer in charge of Zone 5, Mr. Edi Orubiri, who confirmed the incident, said the zonal headquarters was yet to receive the details of the killings from the state Police Command as at 5pm yesterday.

Another source claimed that the two policemen, who were killed in Benin-Sapele Road incident, were also racing to a scene of robbery when the bandits fired at them.

According to the source, some of the robbers sustained gunshot wounds but were able to flee with a gun and some rounds of ammunition which they collected from one of the killed policemen.

But Orubiri, who also confirmed the incident, said only one policeman was killed in the encounter with the robbers. He said that two other policemen were taken to the hospital where they were being treated.

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He added that the leadership of the police in Benin was on the trail of the fleeing robbers.

In Abeokuta, robbers who raided the UNAAB Microfinance Bank shot a woman dead, wounded a policeman and some other residents.

The woman, said to be a staff of the National Blood Transfusion Service, Ogun State centre, was said to have been hit by stray bullets fired by the hoodlums.

The wounded policeman, according to a witness, was shot in a car parked within the bank premises.

It was learnt that the bandits arrived at the bank in a black Sports Utility Vehicle, threatening to kill whoever dared to obstruct their operation. They were said to have made away with an unspecified amount of money.

The robbery disrupted academic activities at the nearby University of Agriculture Abeokuta, Staff School, which shares border with the bank.

While many people wailed as a result of the incident, panic-stricken parents besieged the school to take away their children and wards.

The Ogun State Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Muyiwa Adejobi, confirmed the death of the woman and the attack on the policeman.

Adejobi, an Assistant Superintendent of Police, said the police suspected foul play, adding that investigation into the matter had already commenced.

The police spokesman blamed officials of the bank for failing to inform the police about their cash transactions.

He said, "When the bank manager knew that he wanted to deal with liquid cash, he should have contacted us to ask for police protection.

"We do not regard the place as a bank, but the police have commenced investigation because we are very proactive in Ogun State."

In Uyo, cult members who killed a driver attached to the state Task Force on Environment also set a government vehicle ablaze.

The cult members were said to have accosted some of the taskforce officials who were patrolling some markets on Nyong Essien Street.

It was gathered that four policemen, who accompanied the taskforce, shot at the hoodlums immediately they (policemen) were confronted.

Armed with charms and cutlasses, the cult members reportedly moved closer to the policemen who beat a retreat.

The driver of a Toyota Hilux marked AK277CO1, Mr. Moses George, was matcheted several times by the hoodlums who also set the vehicle on fire.

The cult members, however, took to their heels when about 10 vans carrying policemen arrived at the scene.

It was learnt that the policemen shot sporadically into the air, causing pandemonium that led to the wounding of some people on Oron and Aka Roads.

About 15 people were arrested as a result of the mayhem.

The State Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Gab Ngban, confirmed the death of the driver .

He said, "Whether they are cult members or not, nobody has the right to take the life of his fellow man. We will leave no stone unturned to ensure that the culprits were arrested and brought to book."

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