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Day robbers laid siege to Lagos

September 15, 2012 by Comfort Oseghale



Corpses of two of the policemen killed during the attacks, in a police van

| *credits:*

The relative peace and calm enjoyed by the residents of Lagos was rudely shattered by simultaneous robbery attacks in different parts of the city, which resulted in the loss of lives and property on Sunday, September 9, 2012.

On that day, the criminals operated in a manner that seemed as if the attacks were coordinated, targeting and killing policemen, as well as robbing several bureau de change outlets, and fast food restaurants on the Lagos Mainland.

Residents living in the Agege, Anthony village, Ojodu, Ogba, Itire, Gbagada, Ilesamaja, and Ikeja areas of the metropolis were practically held hostage as not less than 12 robbers, armed with sophisticated weapons, reportedly attacked some bureau de change operators.

By the time the attacks, which altogether lasted about two hours, were over, motorists, roadside vendors and other businesses had been forced to part with cash and other valuable items. Three policemen and one civilian were dead, while many others, including an official of the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority, were wounded.

While the families of the victims and the owners of the affected business outlets count their losses, most people wonder how the robbers could have audaciously carried out simultaneous attacks in different parts of the city unchallenged by security agents. The question that seems to be on every lip is where were the police?

In its September 10, 2012 publication, *THE PUNCH* had reported that some policemen at

the various scenes of the attacks had abandoned their duty posts and fled after they sighted the robbers approaching.

In Agege, the gate of the Pen Cinema Police Division was said to have been shut against visitors while the siege lasted.

While it is not unusual for robbers and other criminals to go on the rampage at this period of the year, *CRIME DIGEST* investigation shows that with the Yuletide approaching, there appears to be a gradual surge in robbery attacks in different parts of Lagos.

Only two weeks ago, about 20 gunmen stormed Adaloko, a community near Ajangbadi and Ijanikin. But the residents of the community were saved by the prompt intervention of policemen attached to the anti-robbery unit of the Area 'E' Command in Ojo and the Ijanikin police division, who confronted the robbers.

The robbers eventually retreated, leaving behind two wounded security guards.

On July 19, a bullion van laden with large sums of money reportedly headed for a bank in the Badagry area when some gunmen in a Sports Utility Vehicle opened fire on it.

Although some of the robbers were reportedly wounded, they successfully made away with the money after killing a policeman, Sunday Agboricaen, and wounding several bystanders.

Also, an Armoured Personnel Carrier conveying a huge amount of money to a bank, was

reportedly attacked by gunmen on the Isolo/Okota Expressway on Aug. 29. The robbers killed a policeman during the attack, but they did not succeed in robbing the vehicle.

In another incident that took place in King's Court Estate, Shasha, a gang of robbers gained entrance into the housing estate from the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, which shares a boundary with the Shasha community. One of the flats in the estate was successfully raided before another tenant raised the alarm and scared the robbers away. But the latter had already stolen several phones and some valuables.

The estate security guards, who were said to have been unaware of the robbery, were reportedly alerted when several police teams and the neighbourhood Oodua Peoples' Congress vigilantes, arrived the scene.

Last Saturday, an Automated Teller Machine in the premises of a commercial bank on Akinpelu Street in the Oshodi area was robbed at midnight. About four armed men were said to have gained entrance to the facility through an unlocked door in the premises.

The robbers were said to have emptied the ATM with the aid of saws and other welding implements after which they escaped.

In her reaction to the latest development, the Police Public Relations Officer in Lagos, Deputy Superintendent of Police Ngozi Braide, assured Lagos residents that the police were on top of the situation. She said, "The police will continue to respond to distress calls

concerning robbery attacks. In the Okokomaiko area, the combined efforts of the Area 'E', Ojo and Ijanikin police commands had successfully repelled an attack by armed robbers. At present, the police are patrolling the area and the robbers have not returned.”

Braide denied the allegations that policemen abandoned their duty posts or made themselves inaccessible to members of the public during last Sunday's coordinated attacks. Describing the incident as unfortunate, she said, “It is not as if the police are not working in Lagos State. We are working. There is no civilised society in the world that crime does not take place. You just try to bring it down to the barest minimum, which is what we are doing. Last Sunday was just unfortunate. The police actually gave a chase and that was why the robbers kept shooting sporadically.

“If we had responded with fire- for -fire, there would have been more casualties. We were simply being mindful of innocent civilians who would have been caught in the crossfire, while the robbers were only concerned with escaping from the scene.”

“During the incident in Shasha, when a distress call was made to the police, an RRS team and several police patrol vehicles responded. Unfortunately, the robbers had escaped before the police arrived. As for the ATM robbery at Akinpelu, we are still investigating that incident; it seems like an inside job because it was neatly done.

“A police patrol team in Akinpelu was stopped at midnight on Saturday by a man who identified himself as a security guard at the affected bank. He claimed some armed men had

tied him up and robbed the ATM before escaping, but the guard could not explain how he was able to untie himself without the help of anyone as he was the only security guard at the scene.

“When we played back the CCTV recording of the bank, we observed three masked men robbing the ATM, which is suspicious. Most robbers don’t wear masks. This case is currently under investigation. I want to assure Lagosians of the Lagos Police Command’s commitment to their security and safety. On Tuesday, the police arrested eight men for being in possession of some AK- 47 rifles. The Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Umar Manko, has vowed to fish out the perpetrators of last Sunday’s robberies in the next few weeks and we are working hard to achieve that.

“There is no cause to panic; everyone should remain calm. To assist the police, it is important that residents are aware of who their neighbours are and report any suspicious activity to the closest police division,” Braide said.

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• **TURAI YAR' ADUA** September 15, 2012 at 12:11 am

Our policemen should always be on red alert instead of diverting their alertness on the hapless okada riders and cab drivers, Meanwhile may their soul rest in peace ! The IG will also maintain his restructuring process to ensure that the entitlement of the slain corps reached their respective families.

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○ **king** September 15, 2012 at 10:55 am

where did the ammed robbers in Nigeria get such a suphisticate weapon? I hope it is not the police or other gun carrier (army/soldiers etc) are the one giving out such guns for robbery operations

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• *bestbulksmsoffers* September 15, 2012 at 12:14 am

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○ *ikukuoma ndigbo* September 15, 2012 at 12:59 am

puting your advert here means that you are sensless and stupid i hate such see this two police on the cold blood .may God have mecy on you. ozo

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■ *Omolola* September 15, 2012 at 3:56 am

Policemen bully civilians with impunity. Armed robbers bully policemen with impunity. I say we are all even. RIP though.