

metro

... City, Crime, Courts

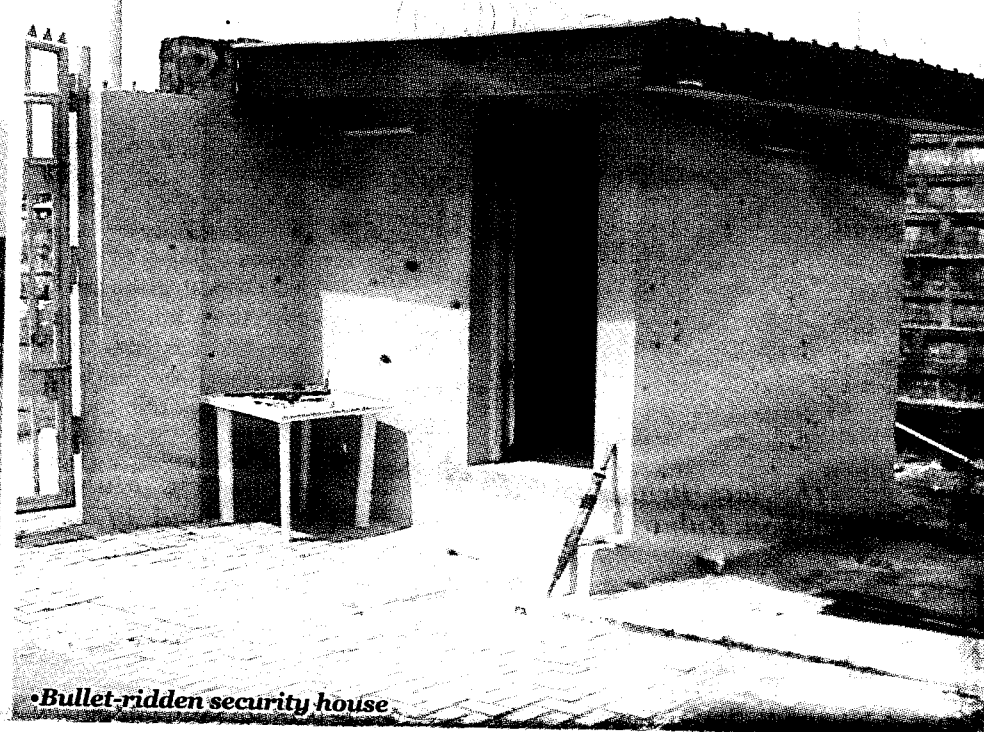
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Robbers kill two policemen APC in Lagos



•The damaged APC

Temitayo Famutimi



•Bullet-ridden security house

Two policemen were on Sunday morning killed by armed robbers in the Ejigbo and Orile Iganmu areas of Lagos State.

The robbers killed a police inspector in Ejigbo while a corporal was killed in Orile Iganmu in the separate incidents. Three other policemen were injured in the attack in Orile-Iganmu.

Also on Sunday, armed robbers laid siege to Regal Seaview Estate, Lekki, Lagos, and ransacked houses for about an hour.

It was learnt that the robbers, numbering over 20, besieged the estate at about 12:25am in four vehicles.

Eyewitnesses said the robbers, who drove into the estate in a Honda, Toyota Sienna mini-bus, a black Prado jeep and a Hilux van, were armed with various sophisticated weapons.

It was learnt that some of the robbers mounted roadblocks at Elf Junction and Ikate Roundabout which serve as access routes into the community while the operation lasted.

One of the security guards attached to the estate, who identified himself simply as Emmanuel, said the attack seemed like a war.

He said no sooner had he opened the gate for a resident that the robbers, who had already taken position in the area, took control of the gate from him and gained entry.

He said, "Four of the robbers came down from the vehicles and flung the gate open. They subsequently drove the

vehicles into the estate and seized me. The other guard who was manning the gate with me abandoned the duty post and ran into the estate.

"They asked if there were riot policemen in the estate and directed me to point at houses occupied by rich men. When I declined to tell them, two of them who were asked to stay with me beat me mercilessly and hit me with gun butts and also threatened to kill me."

He said the robbers then moved from house to house before policemen attached to the residence of a retired Deputy Inspector General of Police in the area tried to resist them but were later overpowered by the bandits.

PUNCH Metro learnt that the policemen attached to the DIG's residence quickly radioed Maroko Police Division and the Rapid Response Squad for reinforcement.

It was gathered that policemen in six vans and an Armoured Personnel Carrier were deployed in the estate. However, the robbers who had got wind of the development started shooting sporadically into different directions.

A resident, Ifeanyi Eze, said an attempt by the policemen to block the entrance of the gate with the APC was rebuffed by the robbers.

He said, "The fatalities would have been much if not that the policemen in the other six vehicles stayed behind and allowed the APC to attack first. The APC came under intense fire.

"The policemen exchanged gunfire with them but this

didn't have much effect as they were not given the chance to strategise and forge a coordinated attack. As a result of this, they had to turn back and fled the scene. This gave the robbers the leeway to escape with their loot."

"I last heard the kind of sounds of the gunshots when I was in the Niger Delta creeks," a bar owner, who wished to be identified simply as Iya Ibadan, said.

The windscreen of the APC marked RRS 287 LA

was riddled with bullets and was said to have developed a major fault as a result of the incident.

Meanwhile, one of the shots from the robbers hit a middle aged man, Tirinmisiyu Afolabi, who lives in an uncompleted building adjacent to the estate.

Afolabi said he was sleeping when he suddenly heard sporadic gunshots. He said before he knew it, he had been hit by a stray bullet after the building was hit severely.

Our correspondent who

visited the estate observed that the gate of the estate and its security post were riddled with bullets. Also, no fewer than 10 houses on the estate were bullet-ridden.

Two dogs that were released by their owners during the attack were also shot by the rampaging robbers and are receiving treatment at a veterinary clinic.

One of the victims described the guns wielded by the bandits as "standard military issued weapons" which are unconventional. He said

the robbers fired about thousand times while the incident lasted.

He said, "They were five in number in our house and were fully armed; they immediately matched me and my mother to her room and started ransacking everywhere.

"When we could not give them the American dollar they asked for, they made away with three laptops, my mum's jewellery and, unfortunately her wedding ring."

In Ejigbo, the policemen were said to have responded

Guard shot by Lagos

Kunle Falayi

Doctors at Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, Ikeja are battling to save the life of a security guard, Joshua Musa, who was shot by policemen after a robbery at a house in Ikota, Lagos, on Saturday.

Joshua, 22, who could not speak when our correspondent visited him at the surgical emergency ward on Monday, was shot in the left side of the chest and abdomen by the policemen, who responded to a distress call when armed robbers stormed the house.

Joshua had a pipe passed to the two entry wounds in his chest and abdomen.

The security guard's brother, Nuhu, who also witnessed the incident, said the five policemen started shooting sporadically

immediately they came into the compound after the robbers had left.

"They came about one hour after the robbers were gone. The policemen were shooting at anything that moved," he said.

Nuhu said Joshua was running towards where he took cover when he was shot.

He said, "Where I was when the shooting started was a little safe, but when Joshua realised that they started shooting at the residents, he ran to join me.

"But a policeman sighted him, turned and fired in his direction. He was hit twice."

One of the bullets was said to have gone through Joshua's chest and went out of his back. The second one was lodged in his abdomen but removed in the hospital.

Nuhu said another tenant, Femi Badejo, a banker,

pleaded with the policemen that he was a tenant in the house but they shot at him and when he hid under a car, they kept shooting at him.

According to him, a woman who offered to show the policemen her room just to assure them she resided in the house was also shot but the bullet only grazed her head.

Joshua's uncle, Adamu Askira, was seething in anger at the hospital, saying the policemen acted irresponsibly.

Askira, a retired assistant superintendent of police, said Joshua had received four pints of blood since he got to the hospital.

He said, "That operation by the policemen was cowardly. How can you get to a robbery scene and start to shoot everything you see?"

"The normal thing to do is to

ensure that the occupants of the house are first identified. Anybody else who has no business in the house can then be grabbed.

Joshua at LASUTH on Monday

KIND, Ogun to involve grass roots in governance

The Kudirat Initiative for Democracy and the Ogun State Government have launched a pilot project, Community Engagement and Public Participation Project, aimed at fully engaging the people

Emmanuel Obe, Awka

at the grass roots in governance. The Founder of KIND, Mrs. Afusat Abiola-Costello, who is also the Special Adviser to the Governor on Millennium Development

Goals, said, during the launch of the project in Abeokuta that the pilot phase would run for 18 months in eight local government areas.

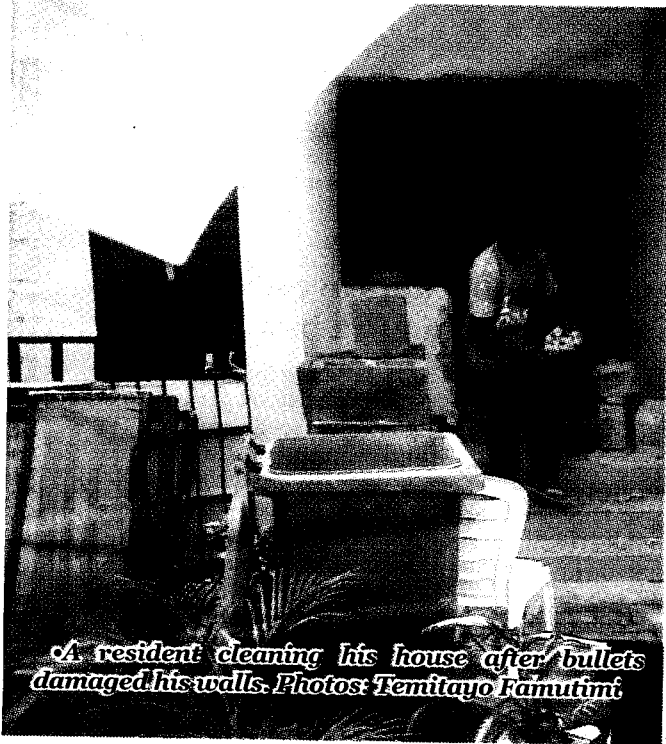
Abiola-Costello said the essence of the pilot project was

basically to make the lives of the people in the communities better by affording them the opportunities to feel the dividends of democracy.

Also, the Executive Director of KIND, Emy Oyekunle, who

explained the modus operandi of the pilot project, expressed regret that reports on programme implementation at the community level indicated that accountability and citizen's access had been below expectations.

damage



A resident cleaning his house after bullets damaged his walls. Photos: Temitayo Famutimi

to a distress call when the robbers engaged them in a gun duel. It was learnt that one of the robbers was killed in the ensuing gunfire while the inspector died at the hospital after sustaining gunshot injuries.

The Orile Iganmu incident happened at the Orile Iganmu interchange bridge at about 3.30 am.

Confirming the killings of the policemen, the Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer, Ngozi Braide, said a pump-action gun was

recovered at the scene of the Ejigbo incident while an AK 47 rifle with 20 rounds of live ammunition were recovered in Orile Iganmu.

"In all, two policemen were killed, three of them were wounded while two of the robbers were also killed. However, the other robbers escaped with gunshot wounds," she said.

On the Lekki robbery, Braide said she had yet to be briefed on the incident promising to get back to our correspondent as soon as she had the details.

Segun Olatunji, Abeokuta

A middle-aged man, Akinyemi Oguntula, was on Sunday allegedly hacked to death in Onigbedu, Ewekoro Local Government Area of Ogun State.

But before he was killed, Oguntula had had a disagreement with his landlord's son, Bankole Soderu.

Oguntula, an employee of a chemical company in the area who was also popularly known as pastor, was allegedly matcheted to death in the early hours of Sunday by unknown persons.

Our correspondent gathered that the deceased had earlier confronted his landlord, Mr. Sunday Soderu, over the alleged smoking of Indian hemp in the house by some non-residents.

Following the disagreement between them, Soderu was said to have reported Oguntula to the traditional ruler of the community, Oba Michael Ajibulu, who was said to have summoned the deceased to his palace.

Landlord, son arrested for tenant's death

A resident, who pleaded anonymity, however, said they heard the deceased sudden cries for help in the middle of the night but no one could come to his rescue at that time.

He said that they later discovered that Oguntula whose body was dealt several machete blows had been killed.

Confirming the incident, the Ogun State Police Command Public Relations Officer, Muiywa Adejobi, said that the landlord and his son had been arrested over the alleged killing of Oguntula.

Adejobi, an assistant superintendent of police, added that both father

and son were now being interrogated by the operatives of the Criminal Investigation Department, Elewera, Abeokuta.

He said as soon as investigations were concluded, the landlord and his son would be charged to court as soon as investigations had been concluded.

320 military spouses, children get skills acquisition training

Kunle Falayi

As part of efforts to eradicate poverty from the ranks of the Nigerian military, the Defence Headquarters on Monday embarked on a two-week skills acquisition programme for 320 dependants of military personnel in Lagos.

Apart from the dependants, five women were picked from the Onigbongbo Local Government Area of the state to also partake in the programme.

Speaking at the inauguration of the Defence Headquarters 2012 Skills Acquisition Programme, the Chief of

Defence Staff, Admiral Ola Ibrahim, said the initiative was in tandem with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals in the area of economic empowerment.

Ibrahim said the programme, which was instituted in 2008, was to equip spouses and dependants of military personnel with skills that would make them self-employed and job creators.

Ibrahim, who was represented by the Deputy Director, Personnel Services DHQ, Air Commodore Abiodun Oyeru, said, "Over the years, we realised that

most of the programmes were aimed at alleviating poverty among personnel while their families were left out. So, in 2007, we wanted to see how our wives and children could also benefit from poverty alleviation by teaching them skills.

"The idea basically is that most of our soldiers go on operation and their wives and children are left behind, unable to cater for themselves. Consequently, the economic empowerment initiative is deliberately aimed at eliminating distractions and promoting greater efficiency and professionalism among military personnel."

Managing Director, Brandedge Consulting, Mrs. Modupe Wigwei, who is in charge of the training, said the beneficiaries would be trained in nine areas namely, hairdressing, beauty salon management; agriculture and allied businesses, soap making, tailoring, catering, photo processing, ICT and business management.

Wigwei said over 16,000 spouses and dependants had so far benefitted from the programme, adding that eight different locations in the country, Lagos inclusive, would benefit from the training this year.

"We believe that with such a structure in place, it would be easier for interested organisations to assist of the barracks community because we believe there is a lot of potential in the barracks community and we would like people to support them," she said.

policemen in critical condition



Monday. Photo: Kunle Falayi

"That line of action by the policemen is utter foolishness. I was a policeman but I cannot give a sensible explanation to what those men did."

Doctors in charge of Joshua could not comment on record because of the hospital's policies.

Joshua was being prepared

for a scan to determine if any bullet fragment was still lodged in his body when our correspondent got to the hospital on Monday.

His wife fanned him on a bed he was lying. She however declined to speak to our correspondent.

Joshua's uncle said he had

not decided what the line of action would be against the police's unprofessional conduct, saying what was uppermost in his mind was his nephew's life.

Police Public Relations Officer, Ngozi Braide, said the Commissioner of Police, Umar Manko, had ordered an investigation into the incident.

She said, "When I spoke with the area commander on Sunday, he said after they received the distress call, a team was sent there and they met the banker lying under the vehicle."

"I think they must have thought he was one of the robbers because as the team was coming, someone within the house was telling them that the robbers were still in the compound. They then shot him but they met the security guard already shot."