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Akesan Robbery: Our men were ambushed, killed while on patrol – Police •Residents seek upgrade of police division

SEPTEMBER 28, 2013 BY KUNLE FALAYI [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)



Akesan area of the LASU-Igando Road, Lagos. Inset: Abanet Hotel and Suites

Residents of Araromi in Akesan area of the LASU-Igando Road, Lagos, said they were terrorised by a gang of armed robbers last week Thursday, which resulted in the death of two policemen and a street guard.

The residents, who were no strangers to robbery attacks, were awoken by the sound of gunfire around 1am that night, putting the area in fear of another impending death.

Saturday PUNCH had reported on May 25, 2013 that a woman, Mrs. Solomon Otuochie, was killed when a gang of robbers stormed her apartment in Akesan during a midnight prayer session in her apartment in Akesan.

In the last two months, the Igando Police Division arrested 10 suspects in connection with various robberies in the area and handed them over to the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, Saturday PUNCH learnt.

Last week Thursday, the robbers attacked Abanet Hotel and Suites located on Taiwo Alonge Street, two streets away from where Otuochie had been killed four months earlier.

By the time the siege was over, two policemen attached to the Igando Police Division, and a guard on the street had been shot dead.

On Wednesday, when our correspondent visited Abanet, there was no sign of the earlier violence that had taken place at the hotel. The hotel staff were seen going about their duties normally.

When **Saturday PUNCH** asked to see the manager, a young woman said she was in charge as the manager was not available.

Asked if anyone was injured by the robbers during the robbery, she said her manager was in the best position to speak on the robbery issue.

"He won't be available until later this evening. He is the one who can comment on the issue. But you can speak to him on the phone," she said.

But the manager did not pick calls made to the phone number provided to our correspondent.

However, one of the residents of Taiwo Alonge Street, where the hotel is located, said the robbers were about eight.

The resident, who declined giving his name for security reasons, said, "We heard several shots. The robbers probably brought automatic guns because they were shooting non-stop and it did not sound like the locally-made guns.

"We heard they were asking for a guest who probably brought in a lot of money. We don't know whether this is true or not because the guest seems to have escaped. No one saw him after the robbery.



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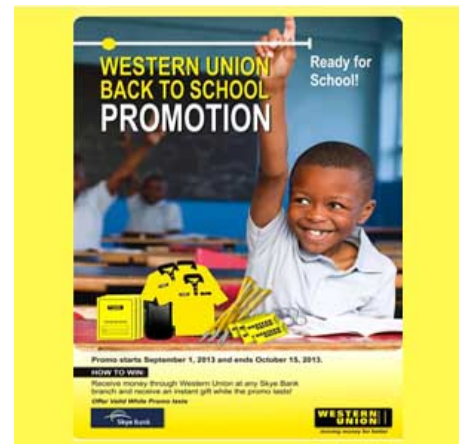
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"We called the police at the Igando division and informed them about the robbery in our area and they responded. But the robbers ambushed and shot at them as they approached the hotel."

Our correspondent could not confirm the identity of the policemen who died in the ambush.

A police source later gave detail of the operation that led to the men's death. The source said it was not true that the policemen who were shot were on guard duty at the hotel during the attack.

He said, "After we got the distress call about the robbery, the Divisional Police Officer, Mr. Ben Osuji, dispatched a patrol team to the scene and followed in another van. The first team cordoned off the hotel immediately they got there.

"The two men that were shot were on foot patrol. Our men patrol the area regularly because our vehicles are not enough for all the places we normally patrol.

"They were ambushed and shot dead by the robbers. The private guard was also killed in the same street. When we got to the hotel where the robbers operated, we cordoned off the place."

The source said the Divisional Police Officer of Igando, Mr. Ben Osuji, is concentrating on recovering the police weapons the robbers took away.

"That is the main focus for now. We are already following up on some credible leads to this effect," he said.

The Lagos State Police Deputy Public Relations Officer, Damasus Ozoani, said that only one policeman died while the other sustained gunshot injuries.

He said, "The policemen were responding to a distress call. Unfortunately, the robbers had laid ambush for them.

"In the exchange of gunfire that followed, one policeman was killed and another was wounded. One of the robbers was also killed. Investigation is ongoing to apprehend the fleeing robbers as some items were recovered from their deceased colleague."

However, residents of Araromi, Akesan, believe the Igando Police Division needs the help of police authorities to make it more capable of combating the increasingly audacious activities of robbers that operate in the area.

One of the landlords, who pleaded anonymity for fear of being a target of robbers, said he was in charge of organising private security for his area. He said, "It was clear during this last robbery that the robbers have more sophisticated weapons. They brought automatic weapons and ambushed the police. We are aware that some of the policemen patrol this area on foot.

"The robber probably know this, which was why they were prepared for them.

"The police need to be equipped with more sophisticated weapons to be of help when we call on them to combat robbers in this area."

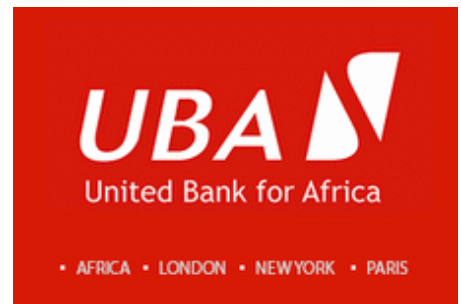
Investigation by *Saturday PUNCH* revealed that the most targeted areas in Igando were Iyewo Estate in Akesan, Egan and Obadore.

Iyewo Estate, located within Araromi, Akesan, residents lamented that there were too many places in the estate where robbers could hide to perpetrate evil.

A resident, who pleaded anonymity for security reasons, took our correspondent round some areas in the estate, which he said, armed robbers had hit at one point or another.

He said, "On my street alone, we had to employ at least two guards. We did that because when you ask two guards to secure about five streets at the same time, they cannot be efficient.

"In our landlords' association meetings, we encourage people to make calls to other landlords to alert them anytime they notice that robbers are in the street. We are very much alert to robberies here."



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