

Police kill three robbers planning to attack plane

November 29, 2016



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Chukwudi Akasike, Port Harcourt

THREE suspected armed robbers were on Monday shot dead by the police during a shootout at the UTC Junction in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital.

One of the hoodlums, who escaped being shot by a special intelligence team from the Inspector-General of Police, said they had planned to attack a plane belonging to Arik Air.

It was gathered that the shootout, which occurred at about 10am, caused confusion in the area.

An eyewitness told our correspondent that some motorists scampered for safety as police and armed robbers engaged one another in a gun battle.

It was also learnt that the suspects, who were in one vehicle, were forced to stop by the traffic light as they queued behind other vehicles waiting for the green light.

One of the suspects, according to the eyewitness, came out of the car and opened fire at some policemen around the place.

The policemen were said to have recognised where the gunshot came from and directed their attention to the place.

It was gathered that efforts made by the armed robbers to escape proved futile as three of them were gunned down, while the last of the four-man gang sustained injuries.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Nnamdi Omoni, confirmed the incident, adding that the IGP Intelligence Team had intercepted the armed robbers after a tip-off.

Omoni stated that while three of the hoodlums were killed in the shootout, one was severely injured.

He stated that the arrested suspect would assist the police in their investigation.

"On interrogation, the suspects said they were on a mission to attack an Arik Air plane," the state police spokesman added.

Identifying the injured suspect as Peter James, Omoni said he had confessed to being one of the members of a gang that killed a police corporal during the All Progressives Congress rally in Okrika in 2015.

"Today, November 28, 2016, the IGP Intelligence Response Team, working on credible intelligence, intercepted a four-man armed robbery gang, which had a mission to attack an Arik Air plane .

"They had made plans to attack the passengers and anybody who would repel them. The IGP team intercepted them and on sighting the police, the suspects opened fire on them.

"Then there was an exchange of fire at the end of which three of them were killed and one was arrested.

"The arrested suspect, who gave his name as Peter James, 30 years old, and a native of Bayelsa State, confessed to have killed a police officer, one Corporal Ifeanyi, at an APC rally in Okirika sometime last year.

"He is currently helping us with our investigation," Omoni said.

He listed items recovered from the suspects as one GPMG rifle with 1000 rounds of ammunition, one AK-47 rifle and two loaded magazines.

Omoni assured members of the public that the state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Francis Odesanya, would not renege on his promise to chase criminals out of the state.