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How police spoilt fun for bank robbers, killed 2

Our Reporter

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By **CHRISTOPHER OJI**

It was a theatre of war last week as policemen from the Area E Command Festac Town, Lagos engaged armed robbers in a fierce gun battle at the Igbo-Elerin, Okokomaiko. When the smoke settled, two of the robbers were shot dead while others escaped.

Crime Watch gathered that Area Commander, Mr Dan Okoro through intelligence reports got information that some armed robbers were planning to raid some banks at the Iba and Agboju area of the state. Okoro who did not want to give chances, deployed two decoy police teams to monitor the robbers movement while a patrol van was station along Lagos State University, Iba road.

The efforts of Okoro eventually paid off as one of the decoy teams suspected two vehicles and informed the patrol team who started trailing the vehicle until they got to Igbo-Elerin where Brigands had decided to begin their operations.

A police detective from the Area E Anti Robbery Squad (SARS) told Crime Watch that as soon as the hoodlums sighted the police van, they opened fire on the police "We expected it, so we rushed down from the van and we returned. while we were shooting, we radioed our commander who personally led his attack team and the decoy teams to the scene.

"We were firing from every corner and when the sons of the guns saw their men falling and crying in anguish, they took to their heels. **When we later combed the area two of them had been shot dead.**

"We also recovered 29 AK 47 magazines, 209 AK 47 live ammunition, 1R ammunition, two gas cylinder filled with gas, iron cutters, shifting spinners, a sa subishi space bus with registration number CG 740 FKJ and a Honda baby boy with number SA 726 AAA"

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Lagos State Police spokeswoman, Ngozi Braide who exhibited the vehicles arms and ammunition recovered at the scene of the shooting to Crime Watch said it would have been another embarrassing bank robbery "But we thank God that the plan was averted. The gas cylinder filled with gas and all the tools recovered showed that the hoodlums were very sure there was money in the banks they wanted to attack"

She said the Commissioner of Police, Mr Umar Manko, has directed Okoro to investigate and fish out the owners of the vehicles recovered from the robbery scene "investigation is ongoing"

She called on the members of the public to give information to the police about criminal activities in their areas while she also enjoined medical practitioners to report any patient with gun shot injuries to the police as she claimed that some of the hoodlums escaped with wounds during the shootout with the police.

However, residents of the area have described the shooting between the police and the robbers as war. Chief Vincent Okeze told Crime Watch that he lived closed to the road and "when the shooting was going on, it was as if the house was going to fall down because, my ceiling was cracking and falling down".

He said when the ceiling in the seating room were cracking his family relocated to the toilet as the place was a little safer, "because the gun shot noise was becoming too much and I felt if it was a shootout between the police and armed robber, the robbers would have fled the scene but rather, there was shooting competition."

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