

Robbers unleash terror on Aba at yuletide

FROM OKEY SAMPSON, ABA

Men of the underworld-unleashed terror on Aba, the commercial city of Abia State during the just-concluded yuletide period.

Crime Watch investigation revealed that shortly before Christmas and New Year, the city, which had enjoyed relative peace suddenly witnessed an upsurge in heinous crimes like armed robbery and kidnapping.

As the hoodlums went on rampage posing serious security challenges to the people, the police also lost their men in the battle against the blood-thirsty merchants of death.

Among the victims was a young school leaver, Chigozie Ejimwama who hails from Umunakana in Ehime Mbano Local Government Area who was murdered by suspected robbers who shot him three times, according to eye witness.

Late Chigozie was said to be returning from a party with his girlfriend when they were accosted by the robbers who immediately asked them to lie down facing the ground.

According to the lady who survived the ordeal, they were attacked by three-gunmen who ambushed them while returning home from the party.

"They searched both of us and collected all our belongings in the process. Chigozie became angry that the hoodlums were robbing us in his area and tried to stop them. Unfortunately, they shot at him three times with a long gun before fleeing the scene. It was after they had left the scene that I started shouting for help before some of the residents rushed out. When *Crime Watch* visited the scene of the incident, police officers from the Aba Area Command led by Mr. Anari Anari were on hand to get information about what happened.

Following the incident closely was the shooting, the same week of one pastor Ime Sunday at Umuochela village in Osisioma Ngwa Local Government.

Sunday was said to be returning from a Church programme alongside his wife when they were attacked by a gang of armed robbers. When the pastor resisted them, the robbers who were three in number, shot and wounded him on the right leg and rushed to an undisclosed hospital where he is recuperating.

During the period, two police Inspectors serving at the Central Police Station (CPS) and the Eziamma police division all in Aba were shot dead by armed robbers in Umuahia, the state capital.

The shot police Inspectors whose names were given as Etuk Sampson from CPS and Jimmy Johnson from Eziamma police division were among the policemen escorting cash of a Pool magnate from Aba to Umuahia.

It was revealed that in what appeared like a carefully planned operation, the suspected armed robbers trailed the police escort from Aba and on getting to a point in the state capital, opened fire and shot dead the two police officers.

Also during the Christmas period, soldiers from Ngwa High School Forward Operation Base (FOB), Aba, arrested eight persons for allegedly stealing 226 bags of rice and two cartons of Indomie Noodle estimated at over N2.5m.

According to investigation, the robbers broke into *Unstoppable Divine Food* on Aba/Owerri road owned by one Emeka and loaded the said food items into two commercial buses.

The suspects allegedly used some machines to cut into pieces automated keys used to padlock the warehouse before gaining access into the premises. The two commercial buses used for the operation were, a Ford with registration No. Enugu: ENU 864 XX and a Mistshibushi L300 Anambra: AWK 79 XA.