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## Calabar prison gun duel: 7 inmates buried

BY OUR REPORTER ON FEBRUARY 22, 2015

NATIONAL

... 9 in critical condition

From: JUDEX OKORO, Calabar

**Seven inmates of Afokang prison in Calabar who died in the gun duel between security agencies and fleeing inmates on attempted jailbreak on Friday morning were buried on Saturday.**

The inmates were reportedly buried in Calabar South.

It was learnt that 9 persons, including three wardens and inmates are critically lying ill at an undisclosed hospital receiving treatment.

The Comptroller of Prison, Mr. Clement Udosen, had told newsmen that nobody died as at Friday, the day of the incident. But reliable sources told *Sunday Sun* that seven inmates have been confirmed dead by prison authorities who are trying to manage the situation.

Udosen, however admitted that several inmates and some prison guards sustained serious injuries during the jailbreak attempt.

A reliable source told *Sunday Sun* that the jailbreak plan was hatched by some inmates comprising hardened criminals, ex-militants and drug dealers who were remanded in the prison custody but were desperate to escape.

The source revealed that the suspected criminals were taken to court early in December last year, but were later brought into the prison on awaiting trial status since the courts have not been sitting.

The source said since they were brought into the Afokang Prison, the authorities have been on high alert

against any invasion of the facility from outside, adding that they never suspected that the plan was being

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hatched from within.

However, trouble was said to have started when the inmates were brought out for the usual morning bath at about 11:00am on Friday, and they suddenly engaged one another in a fight as a smokescreen to attract the attention of prison guards.

When the guards came closer, they swooped on them, disarmed them, quickly moved to the armory, took some assault rifles and started shooting sporadically.

While the shooting was going on, the source further said, some of the inmates attempted to break the wall of the prison with a wood to enable other inmates to escape, but were unlucky as a team of crack security men moved into the prison and took control of the situation.

A prison warden confided in *Sunday Sun* that the leader of the plot was unlucky as most of the rifles he seized had no magazines, except one that had 36 rounds of ammunition, and when he exhausted the bullets in the rifle, he was simply over-powered by a combined team of security operatives, but not without wounding some inmates as he was shooting indiscriminately.

The officer, who doesn't want his name in print narrated what happened, he said: "Some hardened criminals arrested by the police were brought in here in December. Since the courts have not been sitting, one of them, a notorious criminal, tried to lead others into revolting saying that they should be taken to court rather than keeping them here.

"From there, he plotted with others to escape by engaging the guards who were on duty, disarming them and made straight to the armory and took some rifles not knowing that most of them were just dummies with no magazines. Only one of them had about 36 rounds of ammunition which he exhausted without escaping."

As at the time of going to press, the prison authorities have rounded up the inmates involved in the ugly incident, and some of them are said to be undergoing interrogations.

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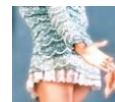
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