

■ Criminals return to Bayelsa with renewed vigour

From **Femi Folaranmi**, Yenagoa

ON January 16, 2019, at about 11am, a gang of armed robbers intercepted a vehicle on Opolo Road, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, and ordered the three occupants to open the door but they refused. The robbers opened fire on the occupants, opened the car and made away with N2million the occupants had just withdrawn from the bank.

One of the occupants hit by bullets was Pumokumo Abel Ozi, a lawyer and member of the Human Rights Committee in the state. He did not survive the incident as he died before help could come.

Expectedly Ozi's killing in broad sparked outrage. Members of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Yenagoa and Sagbama branches are not prepared to allow the matter be treated as a routine case

of armed robbery attack.

For many residents, the attack and killing of Ozi is just a tip of the numerous security challenges confronting the residents of Yenagoa. The old, young, men and women are not spared from the marauding criminals holding Yenagoa hostage. While residents had thought the police and the state government had woken up from their slumber with the swift arrest of one of the killers of Seiyefa Fred, the 16-year-old 100-level Niger Delta University cut down in November 2018, it appears it was

a fluke as the security situation in Yenagoa has gone from bad to worse.

Mr. Collins Boleghia, former chairman, NBA, Yenagoa branch, said: "There is no absolute security anywhere but that of Yenagoa has assumed an alarming and frightening level. Robbers, cultists, kidnappers no longer hide under cover of darkness to perpetrate their nefarious acts in broad daylight one of which resulted in the murder of a lawyer among several other victims."

According to him, the law enforcement

agents seem to be in coma as they are not proactive: "In the past in the nights there used to be visible presence of security personnel. But now you hardly see them beyond 8pm in strategic areas."

The failure of the security agencies to keep up the pace and nip criminal elements in the bud has got many residents worried. Dise Ogbise-Erhisere, NBA chairman, Sagbama branch: "There are still so much



Lawyers in Yenagoa