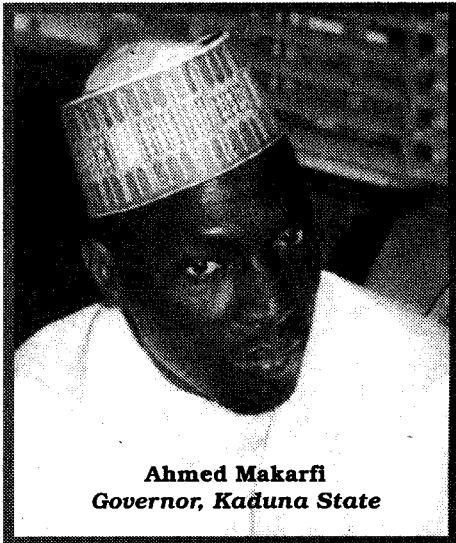


Kaduna Under Siege

Kaduna comes under incessant attacks of organised robbery, raising fears of the ability of security agents to effectively police the city

By HARUNA SALAMI



Ahmed Makarfi
Governor, Kaduna State

The last time robbers struck at the bureau de change, Club Road, Kaduna, was about four years ago. Nobody was killed then. But the recent episode, on Wednesday, February 14, was more deadly. An eyewitness, who simply identified himself as Alhaji Jumare, said, on that fateful day, he was sitting in front of the office of one of the victims. As Jumare and his friend were exchanging pleasantries, he saw a blue-coloured Prado jeep, with Abuja registration number, drive in. Immediately the car was parked, he heard gunshots. Obviously, some of the robbers appeared to have taken positions ahead of the vehicle's arrival. The robbers jumped out of the car with different kinds of guns, shooting in all directions. People became confused: some shouting, while others were running. But Jumare decided to lie where he was, hiding under a car. "As soon as they entered Alhaji Saidu's office, Saidu did not argue. I just heard him shouting after the gunshot. I discovered that they were about eight in number, including females. Some of them went from one shop to another," Jumare recalled.

The robbers held sway for about 30 minutes. Another eyewitness told this magazine that when one of the robbers, obviously the leader, gave the signal for

them to leave, he was told that they still had time and when one of the robbers exhausted his ammunition, he opened the car and brought out another magazine.

When the police eventually arrived at the scene, they were chased away by the robbers. One of the policemen was said to have thrown away his rifle which the robbers took away. But the robbers left shortly after, apparently afraid that the police detachment might have retreated to call for reinforcement. They escaped in three vehicles. One of which was driven by a lady.

The incessant robbery cases in Kaduna have been a source of worry to many residents of the city. Last year, a

businessman, Abdullahi Hussaini, aka Dan Alhaji, was robbed in broad daylight around Durbar Hotel Junction. As the robbers were fleeing, he shouted "barrow!" (thieves). The robbers turned back and gunned him down. The policemen stationed in front of the hotel were said to have fled on hearing gunshots. Again, Shehu Lawal, then Independent National Electoral Commission commissioner in Edo State, was shot dead.

Towards the end of last year, armed robbers also struck at Platinum Habib Bank, on Ahmadu Bello Way, Kaduna, blocking the busiest dual carriageway in the city. The incident, which lasted for more than 30 minutes, resulted in police casualty. Barely five days after the robbery at the bureau de change, robbers struck again. This time, at the home of Auwal Dhatti, one of the operators of a bureau de change. He was killed.

In all these cases, no arrest has been made. The police, through its public relations officer, Sa'ad Yahaya, simply say that investigations are ongoing. ■

Omar Succeeds Oshiomhole

Abdulwaheed Omar, former deputy president of the Nigeria Labour Congress, moves up

By JIDE BABALOLA

The Nigerian Union of Teachers, NUT, one of the affiliate unions that comprise the Nigeria Labour Congress, NLC, was rewarded after a rigorous campaign that led to the emergence of Abdulwaheed Omar, their union's national president, as Adams Oshiomhole's successor. He polled 927 votes to beat Fidelis Edeh, president of the Nigeria Civil Service Union, NCSU, who got 210 votes.

Elected unopposed as deputy presidents into the new EXCO of NLC were Peter Adeyemi of Non-Academic Staff Union of Universities, NASU, Promise Adewusi of Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities, SSANU, and Irabor Onikolease of the Maritime Union, while four others — Abdullahi Bungudu of Agriculture and Allied Workers Union of Nigeria, AAWUN; Kingsley Ogba of Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees, NULGE; Issa Aremu of National Union of Textile, Garment and Tailoring Workers of Nigeria, NUTGTWN; and John Onyenemere, the president of National Union of Food, Beverage and Tobacco

Employees — were all elected as vice presidents.

Voted in as treasurer was Ayuba Wabba while Gidado Hamman and Peter Akpatason emerged as deputy national treasurer and national trustee respectively. The trio of Abubakar Sadiq, Bashorun Hakeem and Samuel Adeoye were returned unopposed as internal auditors as two ladies — Lovina Okoro and Coretta Balogun — were returned as Ex-officios to amplify NLC's strategic plan on gender issues.

The list of victorious candidates accurately tallies with names contained in the 'Winning Team' list circulated in the hall the day before the Hassan Sumonu-supervised elections took place. All stakeholders concur that the elections were generally free and fair. The teachers' union, whose numerical strength translated into 300 out of a total of about 1,200 delegates, left nothing to chance as the NUT-sponsored pre-conference dinner for all delegates that took place at the Centre for Arts and Culture, Area 10, Abuja, and which appeared to be an altruistic gesture, turned out to be an event used by the teachers to win over more delegates' support for Omar. ■