

Robbers Strike in Abakaliki, Kill 11

The spate of armed robbery attacks sweeping across the country, went up one notch yesterday with the killing of no fewer than 11 persons, including a member of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and school children, when a 10-man robbery gang stormed a first generation bank in Afikpo, Ebonyi state.

The killing of the 11 persons brings the death toll of the victims of the robbery operations that took place in Osun and Ebonyi States within two days to 23 even as police investigation into the attacks has begun.

The gang was said to have also carted away a whopping sum of money said to be close to N15 million from the Afikpo bank. An eye witness account told THISDAY that the robbers arrived the bank at about 10.30 am in two V-C Land Cruiser jeeps, and shot sporadically into the air in a bid to scare people away. While about 20 persons are said to be wounded in the operation that lasted till 12 noon, sources said the NYSC member killed was billed to pass out on Thursday, as she was said to have carried out her primary assignment, as one of the assistants to the

• Police probe Ilesha incident

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chairman of Afikpo North local government area, Mr. Obinna Agha.

Among those wounded are students and teachers who were inside the bank, when the armed robbers came, while most of the bank staff escaped.

The ten-man robbery gang had among them, two ladies, with one of them manning the steering. Details of the unfor-

tunate incident were still sketchy as at the time of filling this report, but informed sources disclosed that this is the third time armed robbers were attacking the bank, within five months.

The incident that held the entire town spell-bound while it lasted, took the people unawares, as they watched helplessly while the robbers had a field day, executing the operation "in a commando style".

A Police team led by the Divisional Police Officer

(DPO) Afikpo, Mr. Jonathan Nnamdi was said to have arrived the scene by 12.30, thirty minutes after the robbery, even when the divisional headquarters was less than five minutes drive from the bank.

Sources further disclosed that two of the robbers were wearing masks while the rest were unmasked, making people to believe that the masked men must have been indigenes of the area, who must have been aware that huge sums of money, intended for the payment of teachers' salaries was lodged into the bank the previous day.

Gidado Idris Rejects CFR Honour

From Chuks Okocha

in Abuja

ferred with the award of Commander of the Federal Republic (CFR), a statement it said superceded an earlier announcement to the effect that Ekweremadu was to be conferred with Officer the Federal Republic (OFR).

A statement issued by Mr. Paul Odenyi Special Adviser (Media) to the Deputy Senate President quoted the Minister to have said

that "It (the CFR honour) is in line with a precedent already set with former holders of the position of Deputy Senate President." The statement said further that Senator Ekweremadu had already thanked the Honours Committee for the gesture, saying "It falls in line with government's emphasis on due process and rule of law."

Idris' grouse was that the honour of CFR bestowed on him was far below the award of the honour of the Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger (GCN) on

head of the investiture of national awards Thursday in Abuja, former Secretary to the Government and Head of Civil Service of the Federation, Alhaji Gidado Idris has rejected the Commander of the order of the Federal Republic (CFR) bestowed on him by the Federal Government.

In a similar development, the office of the Minister for Special Duties clarified that the Deputy Senate President, like Ekweremadu would be con-