

Armed robbers strike in Onitsha, kill four

By Anayo Okoli

AWKA—DARE-DEVIL Armed robbers yesterday morning struck in Onitsha killing four persons on Court Road off the ever busy Old Market Road. The incident threw the area into pandemonium as residents and shop owners on the streets ran helter skelter for their lives.

Yesterday's incident came barely 24 hours after two persons were also shot dead by armed robbers at Ozomagala Street, on Tuesday.

But yesterday's incident threw the neighbourhood and passers-by into confusion as the lifeless bodies of the robbery victims laid at the nearby hospital with neighbours and sympathizers besieging the scene to catch a glimpse of the lifeless bodies of four young people.

Women were seen weeping profusely just as they rained curses on the robbers.

Incidentally, the robbery incident took place few poles

from the headquarters of Onitsha Area Command and Central Police Station, but there was no police response, more than four hours after the incident.

According to eye-witness accounts, the robbers numbering about eight came to the sales depot of liquor distributor at No. 3, Court Road, Onitsha, at about 9.00am with five motor cycles, popularly known as Okada.

One of the robbers was said to have disguised as an applicant, and approached one of the staff of the company, asking for a job. But shortly after other members of the gang followed him and stormed the place.

The robbers, the sources said, threatened the sales girls with guns and asked them for their money. According to one of the sales girls, a member of the gang put his gun into her mouth, demanding for the money from her and a customer who she was attending to but they told them that they had no money. The robbers, she said, threatened to blow-off their head since they liked money more than her life.

According to her, while they were ordered to lie face down, in the other stall she heard a gun-shot, and two of her colleagues were shot dead. The robbers, she said also shot at a fleeing male colleague and a lady at a hair saloon opposite the depot and two of them died instantly.

The four bodies were later deposited at the Onitsha General Hospital Morgue.

Similar incident took place at Ozomagala Street, Odoakpu, Onitsha on Tuesday where a labourer and a store attendant were shot at a Cement depot by robbers who were in search of money.

Crime rate in Onitsha has of recent been on the increase after the dislodgement of members of National Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO), Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), and other miscreants from their illegitimate source of income.

ably sanctions for absenteeism

"I want to remind those absent that they will not be spared, their allowances will be deducted at source," he said.

It was learnt that only seven of the 24 members were present at Tuesday's session, forcing the House, which just resumed from vacation on Monday, to adjourn its sitting till Monday, next week.

The Deputy Speaker, Chief Uzor Azubuike, the Majority Whip, Chief Ngozi Uluwa, the Minority Leader, Chief Donatus Nwamkpa and the Minority Whip, Chief Mathew Ochiobi, were among the legislators that were absent.