

# CITY SCOPE

## Drivers, agbero clash in Ikorodu

## Robbers hold Badagry expressway residents hostage

Stories by Evelyn Usman

Lagosians residing along Badagry expressway are currently gripped with fear, following the new wave of robbery incidents in the area. Mostly affected are workers who close late from work.

The affected areas include Mile Two, Volks, Alaba International, Costain Road, Ojo, Ira and Iba.

Investigations carried out by *City scope* revealed that the bandits who apparently took advantage of the recent ban on commercial motorcycle operators, otherwise known as *okada*, from operating between 7 pm and 6 am, deliberately create traffic hitch in the ever-busy highway where they dispossess motorists and commuters of cash, GSM handsets and other valuables.

In some instances, the robbers go as far as barricading the highway with their operational vehicles, pretending that it had developed a fault in order to cause traffic congestion, so as to be able to carry out their nefarious acts. In most cases, reports said some of their female victims were raped and others severely injured.

Another disturbing incident is the spate of killings in Ojo area by two unknown rival cults who have resorted to inscribing the number of their victims boldly on their dead bodies. For instance, *City scope* sighted two lifeless bodies believed to be those of a rival cult group last week at Volkswagen U-turn. On one of the bodies was written number 10, indicating that the cultists had killed ten members of its rival group while on the body of the other was written number 13, signifying that the other group had an upper hand.

Another harrowing experience was the killing of three students of the Lagos State University, Ojo on August 27, 2006, after a violent clash between two rival cult groups. The two cults identified as Eiyee and the Neo-Black Movement Fraternity, otherwise known as the Black Axe, sources said, had been engaged in a cold war in the university community for some time now, over unresolved issues. On the said day, the warring cult groups threw caution to the wind as they openly confronted each other outside the university community, throwing residents of Iba Estate and its environs into panic.

When *City scope* visited these areas, most of the residents declined speaking at first, for undisclosed reasons. But those who volunteered to speak after much persuasion, spoke on condition of anonymity and made startling revelations of the happenings in the area.

According to one Mr Fabian, "I have been living in this area for decades. This is where I had all my children. In fact, eight of them. They all finished their primary and tertiary education here.

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Policemen with some arrested criminals.

But with the recent spate of armed robbery, there are fears that we may start fleeing the area if something urgent is not done to curb the menace. In fact, when it is 8pm, most of us retire to our houses for fear of being attacked by these dare-devil robbers who are bent on going to any length to achieve their devilish purpose. Those I pity most are workers who are being attacked on a daily basis along the expressway. I know the Police have been trying their best to drive them away because, recently, there has been a 24-hour patrol. But immediately the Police leave the scene, you will see these boys back on the road. We are therefore asking for standby checkpoints along the road to drive these bad boys permanently away."

One of the students who identified herself as Aniefiong Inyereke said, "Ojo Local Government Area as a whole used to be a peaceful environment until recently. Few days ago, someone was killed in broad daylight at Costain by unknown cult members and on the lifeless body was written the number of victims so far killed by the group. For instance, if one of the groups has killed eight members of their rival group, they will indicate that on the lifeless body. In fact, we are all living in fear. At present, no one can tell if they are students or area boys because they don't usually wear any of their costumes to indicate which of the fraternities they belong to. In order to check this, the school authority invited the Police sometime ago, following which a Police post was sited in the school. That is why we cannot tell for sure if students are responsible for these killings."

For Mrs Aliogu Ekene, "My place is very close to the popular Alaba International market along the Badagry Expressway. In the last few months, robbers have in-



Battle-ready mobile policeman.

vaded the market several times. Three months ago, they raided over 150 shops in the market and fired sporadically. Our hearts were literally in our mouths that night because we were later informed that the robbers were over fifty in number. After that robbery, there have been several others which have been foiled by the Police. Also, on August 5, 2006, a mobile policeman was shot dead by a gang of armed robbers between Ira and Alaba International. The Mobile policeman whom we all knew as Ali, had just closed from work on that fateful day and was going home in the company of one of his colleagues, when the robbers who were in a jeep called out to him. But as he made to turn to the direction where he heard his name, the robbers pumped several bullets into him, resulting in his death. Tell me, if a thing like that could happen to a security agent, then we are in trouble. It is not as if the Police are not working. I think they need more sophisticated weapons to withstand those of the men of the underworld."

Another resident who identified himself as Nnamdi Onyedika said: "Each time I leave the office late, I commit my life into God's hand because I believe He is the only one that can save me

from the hands of these dare-devils. Anytime there is traffic along the Badagry Expressway, you will see them come in batches. The first batch will come and dispossess their victims of their belongings. Moments later, another batch of robbers will come asking for what had earlier been collected from the motorists and commuters. God save you if you say you do not have anything because before you even start the statement, one of them would have slapped you across the face. So, what most people do, is to share the money with them into bits and give to each of the batches. That way, they won't be harmed. At times these fellows rape innocent ladies that do not have anything to part with. The situation got worse after the ban on *okada* operators as from 7pm."

In an apparent move to check the situation, the Lagos State Police Command said it has put in place strategic measures to curb criminal activities in the state. As a first step, the Command's boss, Mr Emmanuel Adebayo has directed that a 24-hour patrol of the state, with special concentration on robbery-prone areas, be carried out. The patrol, according to Adebayo, is to be supervised by each Divisional Police Officer (DPO) assuring that the Command had the situation under control.

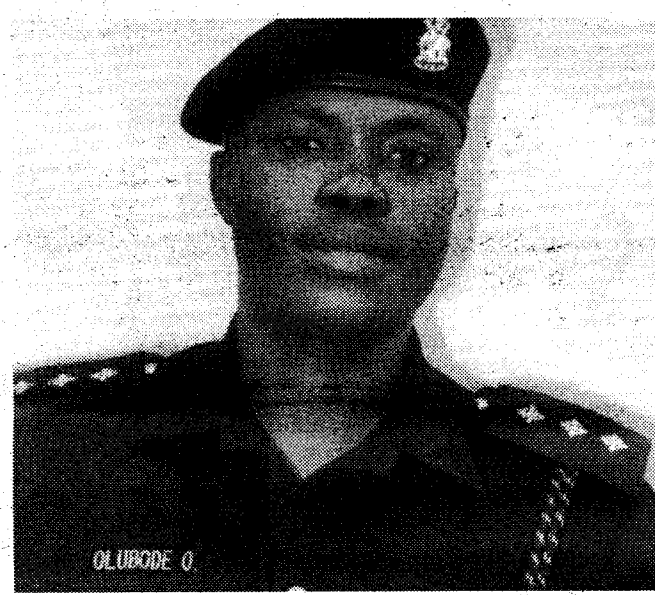
Ikorodu, in the outskirts of Lagos, was last week thrown into confusion following a violent clash between commercial bus drivers and motor park touts otherwise known as *agbero*, over a purported increase in the daily registration fees. The bloody clash which paralysed commercial activities in the ever busy park, resulted in the death of one Lekan.

*City scope* gathered that trouble erupted when the motor park touts informed drivers of the mass transit buses of an increase in their daily registration fees. The new development was said to have raised dust as the drivers maintained they would pay the former fee, arguing that they had several other fees to pay. This reportedly led to argument which later degenerated into a free-for-all fight in which dangerous weapons were used.

During the fracas, several vehicles had their wind-screens shattered while three other cars inside the park were reportedly vandalised.

After the dust settled, the drivers who came to resume normal services at the park the next day were startled to discover the lifeless body of one of their members at a filling station, close to the park. The death reportedly generated another round of violence as they vowed to take their pound of flesh.

Confirming the incident, Police spokesman, Mr Olubode Ojajuni said, "Policemen from Area 'H' Command, Ogudu who were informed of the situation, went to the filling station at Ikorodu round-about and removed the corpse to the public mortuary for autopsy. The Police are on the trail of one Waheed and others responsible for the mayhem. The case is, however, under investigation."



Mr. Olubode Ojajuni, Lagos Police PPRO

## Robbers shoot police constable in bus raid

Lagos—A Police Constable was weekend shot by a five-man robbery gang who were operating along Mobolaji Bank Anthony Way in Ikeja area of Lagos. Several persons were also reported to have sustained some degrees of injury while fleeing the scene of the robbery.

Reports said the gang which was armed with sophisticated weapons, strategically positioned their unmarked operational vehicle on top of the bridge, pretending it had a fault and dispossessed some motorists who attempted to stop and give a helping hand.

They were said to have stopped a commercial bus in which was a Police Constable identified as Bala Abdullahi. Attempts to forcefully collect the constable's money which he just withdrew from the bank, met with some resistance, as the constable reportedly fought with one of the robbers.

In the process, the constable was said to have been shot in the chest before he finally released the money in his possession. However, sighting a team of policemen, three members of the gang reportedly

escaped. But one of them whose head was said to have been broken by the wounded constable, managed to flee the scene.

Confirming the incident, the Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Olubode Ojajuni said, "there was distress call at Ikeja Police station that a gang of armed men were operating on the bridge along Mobolaji Bank Anthony Way, Ikeja. In a swift response, a team of Anti-Robbery policemen from the station raced to the scene, met Constable Bala Abdullahi shot in the chest while trying to prevent the hoodlums from robbing him of his money. The Police constable injured the robber in the head. The team trailed one of the robbers to Ikeja General Hospital where he was arrested with one Bronie pistol number ES 1033 and five rounds of live ammunition. The suspect who gave his name as Imoh Harrison of no fixed address, confessed to have committed the crime with one Effiong now at large residing at Sango Otta, Ogun State. The constable is responding to treatment and SCD Panti is investigating the case."