

Four Policemen shot dead by robbers

By Emma Nnadozie &
Albert Akpor

LAGOS — FOUR police men were yesterday shot dead by a gang of armed robbers who ambushed them while they were on routine patrol along Eric Moore road Surulere Lagos.

The incident happened barely one week after four other policemen attached to the Anti-Robbery Squad at the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), Pantti and MOPOL 20 were equally killed by another gang of armed robbers who attacked a commercial bank in Abule-Egba, a suburb of Lagos.

Following this development the State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Emmanuel Adebayo immediately ordered the deployment of 8,000 policemen made up of 800 rank and file, 150 Inspectors and 50 Superior officers on regular standby in all the eight Area commands of the state with a marching order to fish out the gang of robbers responsible for the recent killings in the state.

Reports said the four policemen: Corporal Stephen Onyengbo with Force number 176068; Angelo Takaba F/C 200864; Jacob Owusemi F/C 395688 and John Otubu F/C

396739 who were attached to the Anti-robbery squad, Bode Thomas Division in Surulere were on routine patrol of the area when they suddenly noticed a blockade between Costain and Nigerian Breweries.

The policemen who were in an unmarked red bus with registration number HY 364 AAA given to them by SUN-FLAG Nig. Ltd reportedly alighted to dislodge the blockade only to run into a hail of gunshots from armed robbers who were on ambush.

Sources said three of the policemen were killed on the spot while the fourth one died in an unnamed hospital later.

When *Vanguard* visited Bode Thomas Police Station at about 3.30pm yesterday, both officers and men attached to the Division were seen in mourning mood while their female counterparts were crying weeping with families and relations of the slain officers who had besieged the station to get first hand information on the incident.

The Divisional Police Officer (DPO), CSP Uche Alozie was said to have personally led a team of Anti-robbery policemen to comb all the hide-outs in the area in a frantic search for the fleeing armed robbers while the bullet-rid-

dled bus said to be the only patrol vehicle in the Division which the slain policemen were using was parked in front of the station.

Meanwhile, following this development, the state police boss Mr. Emmanuel Adebayo ordered the immediate deployment of 8,000 policemen on a regular stand in all the eight Area Commands in the state.

The policemen are expected to comb all criminal hide-outs and black spots in the state with a view to fishing out members of the gang that had been terrorising the state in recent times

The police boss, Adebayo, confirmed the incident to *Vanguard* assuring that his men were already on the field and would fish out perpetrators of the crime.

2006 Hajj face

By Kenneth Ehigior

HUMAN and technical problems may impact negatively on the 2006/2007 Hajj airlift, as some of the operators designated for the exercise are currently faced with the challenges of either sourcing aircraft or bureaucracy at relevant government ministries.

Sources told *Vanguard* that because of defaults of the past, lessors overseas are reluctant to release their aircraft to operators from Nigeria in the absence of a down payment of 50% of the cost of lease of any aircraft.

Expectations of the opera-

tors to secure some initial payment by government to enable them also pay for leased aircraft are said to have been dashed, as state governments are this time not disposed to putting down money when they have not seen any aircraft on ground in Nigeria.

The state of unpreparedness of the some of the operators played out at a recent forum organised by the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) to assess the readiness of the carriers in order to prevent a repeat of last year's Hajj which only half of the projected number of pilgrims in the country made.

Vanguard gathered that