

# CrimeAlert

BY OKONKWO  
EZE, ONITSHA

**T**HE Police in Anambra State, seem to be on the war path with criminals ranging from armed robbers, assassins, kidnappers and even fraudsters who have succeeded in creating black spots and hideouts where they carry out their nefarious activities daily. These dangerous spots dot every nook and cranny of the state.

Following this development, the police have declared total war against these criminals who have constantly launched their onslaught against law-abiding citizens in the state.

The situation has gotten to an extent that hardly a day passes without hearing of one crime or the other taking place in some parts of the state.

## Black spots

In Awka, the capital territory of the state, some of the black spots where the bandits usually carry out their nefarious activities could be identified as UNIZIK temporary site junction along the Enugu/Onitsha expressway, Nise/Agulu/Nanka/Ekwulobia road where the criminals usually patrol with their motorbikes, concealing their arms inside their waists.

In the industrial town of Nnewi and its metropolis, the notoriety and porosity of Oraifite/Ozubulu/Okija federal highway, is never in doubt as commuters usually have nightmare plying the road that leads from the commercial city of Onitsha to Owerri, Port Harcourt, Aba, Cross River and Akwa Ibom states.

## Activities of the criminals

Inside Onitsha metropolis, the Onitsha/Oba/Owerri road, the Upper Iweka Fly-over bridge (both on top and under), Okpoko junction, Oguta road by Queen of the Rosary College (QRC), Vinee Oil, Army gate, Nkpor/Umuoji road, Nkpor junction and New Tarzan junction, Uga junction by Atani road Benin Motor Park at Bridge-head market are some of the bad spots where the bandits strike constantly.

However, the police are not resting on its oars in bringing the activities of the criminals to a check. Unfortunately, the criminals are somehow smarter than the security operatives, to the extent that in most cases, they outsmart the operatives in gun duels.

**Encounter with robbers:** Recently, a robbery suspect was shot dead by men of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, SARS, Okpoko unit, during an encounter while his gang member escaped with bullet wounds. The shootout came barely 48 hours after a gang of armed robbers shot and killed a vigilance operative attached to Okpoko Vigilante Services in

# C-R-A-C-K-I

## Police, criminals on path in Anambra



\*Suspected kidnap kingpin aka Hunchman

Okpoko Layout, during which one of the suspects was equally arrested by the police.

The deceased suspect and his escaped gang member who operated on a motorcycle as a two-man robbery gang, according to the source, had blocked a commercial motorcyclist on top of the Upper Iweka Fly-over bridge at about 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday, armed with a locally-made, double-barrel pistol, dispossessed him of all his

operatives recovered the victim's motorcycle, the GSM Handset and the sum of money snatched from him by the robbers, just as the robbers' locally-made pistol with two live cartridges were equally recovered.

Eye-witnesses who gave a bit-by-bit account of the encounter between the robbers and the victim on one side, the robbers and the SARS operatives on the other side, told **Crime Alert** that

**‘When the duo opened fire and took to their heels to evade arrest, the SARS operatives returned fire for fire, killing one of them instantly, while the others barely managed to escape with their own motorcycle and bullet wounds’**

valuables, including the motorcycle, GSM Handset and an unspecified amount of money.

The source further hinted that as soon as the suspects were through with their victim and wanted to escape with his motorcycle, operatives of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, SARS, Okpoko Unit, stumbled into them and attempted to arrest them. When the duo opened fire and took to their heels to evade arrest, the SARS operatives returned fire for fire, killing one of them instantly, while the other barely managed to escape with their own motorcycle and bullet wounds.

Consequently, the SARS

the victim who simply identified himself as Nwike Sixtus, praised the police for their timely intervention during the robbery operation.

Meanwhile, one of the robbery suspects who shot and killed an operative of Okpoko vigilance group simply identified as ‘Stubborn’, is now helping the police to track down four other members of his gang who are on the run, after killing their victim.

He was said to have been picked up by the SARS operatives in his hideout at Okpoko at about 2.30 a.m.

It was not clear as at press time why they decided to kill the operative but sources said their

action might not be unconnected with the constant foiling of robbery operations in the area by the Okpoko vigilance operatives, which might have made the nefarious activities of the robbers in the area unsuccessful and very difficult for them to contend with.

**Other notorious spots:** In another development, the Obosi bypass along the Onitsha/Oba dual carriageway has been completely taken over by robbers, particularly from the evening hours till dawn. The spot has become so notorious that even the

security operatives themselves are very much aware of the situation, but it does appear they are helpless for one reason or the other.

Just a fortnight ago, some robbers who operated on motorbikes, trailed a Mercedes Benz lorry from Onitsha down to the bypass at about 6.30 p.m. and forced the driver to stop under gun point. When the driver eventually stopped, they robbed all the occupants of the vehicle in the full glare of commuters passing through the road.

Some of the passengers who wanted to stop at the bypass to board another vehicle or commercial motorcycle to

## How blood bath was a

•Residents of Festac, Amuwo-odofin ca

By IFEANYI OKOLIE

**T**HE clash between policemen attached to Area ‘E’ police Command, Festac Town, Lagos and some officials of Amuwo- Odofin Local Government led by its Chairman, Comrade Ayodele Adewale, last Sunday, nearly turned bloody but for the timely intervention of Assistant Commissioner of Police, Dan Okoro, who saved the day.

Eyewitnesses told **Crime Alert** that some people posing as local government officials from Amuwo-Odofin, in company of armed officials of Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps, accosted a team of policemen at Festac link bridge while attempting to drive an impounded trailer truck with reg No. XN 845 KTU to their station. The truck was earlier involved in a road accident that killed a motorcyclist along Lagos-Badagry Expressway.

They reportedly ordered that the truck be taken to the local government secretariat for flouting a law prohibiting its passage on the road. This did not go down well with the policemen escorting the truck to their station and they resisted it.

It was gathered that the situation became highly charged when the Chairman of Amuwo-Odofin L.G.A. arrived the scene and allegedly blocked the ill-fated truck with a Sport Utility Vehicle and a Hilux Van, thereby, preventing the policemen from

taking the truck to their station.

## Eyewitness account

An eyewitness, Emma Okechukwu, told **Crime Alert** that the blockade infuriated the policemen and a heated argument ensued between them and the local government officials, forcing the armed NSCDC men to cock their rifles waiting for orders to shoot. “I was disturbed with what I saw that day. The action of the Local Government Chairman and his staff was too bad. I wonder why they would want to obstruct lawful police operation. The chairman over stepped his bounds, but I am yet to understand why he would do that.

## Responsibility of the police

When I listened to their argument, it was obvious that the Chairman does not want the police to take the truck to their station; rather he wanted them to take the truck to a complex owned by the Local Government. I see nothing wrong in that, but the decision on where to park trucks impounded by the police are solely the responsibility of the police and not the Local Government Chairman. The armed NSCDC men and the police almost shot at themselves but the timely intervention of the