

Prison break: 19 armed robbery suspects escape from police custody in Calabar, 2 gunned down

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...One of their girlfriends supplied hacksaw to help them escape — Police

...4 nabbed for murder, robbery

By Ike Uchechukwu & Emma Una

NINETEEN armed robbery suspects have reportedly escaped from custody at the Cross River Police Command headquarters at Diamond Hill, Calabar.

The escape, according to a police source, took place Sunday night when the robbers used a hacksaw to cut the iron key to the cell where they were detained and made good their escape

"As I speak to you, the station guard and some other officers are being detained. This could not have happened with the SARS. Our lives are in danger," a police source, which prefers anonymity, told Vanguard.

He said none of the escapees has been re-arrested as at yesterday's afternoon but the authorities have dispatched crack teams across the city to track the runaway robbers.

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Meanwhile, the Cross River State Police Command has clarified the alleged escape of the armed robbery suspects.

Ms Irene Ugbo, the state Police Command spokesman, said one of the robbery suspects' girlfriend supplied the hacksaw with which the robbers used in cutting the iron key to the cell where they were detained to make good their escape

She said only three of the robbers made the attempt and "two of them were gunned down while one was arrested and returned to the cell."

She said the re-arrested robber gave the details on how the lady supplied the hacksaw and how they made attempt to escape.

4 nabbed for murder, robbery in Calabar

Meanwhile, a 20-year-old boy was among four persons arrested by operatives of the Cross River State Police Command for murder and armed robbery in the state.

The four suspected robbers, who attacked their victim and killed him in the process, were apprehended after a manhunt based on credible intelligence.

Vanguard learned that the incident, which led to the death of one Ekanem Ekanem occurred at 6, Asang Eniong Street, Calabar South on Sunday.

Briefing newsmen, yesterday, in Calabar, the Cross River State Commissioner of Police, Abdulkadir Jimoh, said the four suspects, who are now in their custody, were arrested by his men from Uwanse Division on Sunday.

He said the arrest followed a manhunt based on credible intelligence they received, which led the surveillance team to swing into action.

"The suspects include Theophilus Nwosu, 25; Godwin Ekwen, 27; Adigo Emmanuel, 20 and Ben Clement Arikpo, 30, while two locally made pistols, including live and expended cartridges and phones were recovered.

"Sadly, their victim, one Ekanem Ekanem was yesterday confirmed dead at the Navy Hospital, Calabar after being shot in the head.

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