



35-man robbery gang invades Ikire, Apomu, Ikoyi, kills 10 persons in Osun

By Shina Abubakar

●Only 7 were killed —Police

OSOGBO—Ikire and Apomu towns in Irewole and Isokan local government areas of Osun State have in recent times featured in the news for several violent reasons, especially inter-communal clash. However, some daredevil armed robbers, Wednesday, laid siege to the two communities killing eight persons including three policemen.

It was gathered that the notorious gang, numbering about 35 entered the communities through Ikire acting on information that a bullion van would be arriving at one of the commercial banks in the two towns.

They reportedly positioned themselves in four different strategic points where they launched the attack simultaneously at Ikire Divisional Police Headquarters, FirstBank, Ikire; Access Bank, Apomu and Armoured Personnel Carrier stationed at Ikoyi around 6:30 pm.

A resident, Taiwo Kolawole, said before the attack, about four young men sat in front of his shop, adding that their movement was suspicious.

He said: "Four strange young men sat beside my shop and I was almost tempted to challenge them but while I was contemplating asking them their mission, a car arrived with four other masked people and they launched an attack on Access Bank.

"We quickly scampared for safety and were watching them from a distance. They were shooting sporadically into the air within the bank complex but could not access the banking hall.

"While that was ongoing at Apomu, a three-man gang stormed the Ikire Police Divisional Headquarters on a commercial motorcycle. The masked men reportedly hid their rifle inside a sack

and threw dynamite inside the security point before accessing the station.

"On gaining access, a Police Inspector, Lekan Olalere, and two Special Constabularies, Oladeni Olalekan and Oyediji Muyideen were killed.

"Similarly, at the Armoured Personnel Carrier stationed at Ikoyi junction, dynamite was used to demobilise the carrier while the mobile police officer at the station, ASP Osho Oluranti, was also killed.

"At FirstBank located around

Oja ale' Ikire, dynamite was used to blast the automated doors and the banking hall was razed with gunshots, while the palace square too was attacked."

Civilian casualties

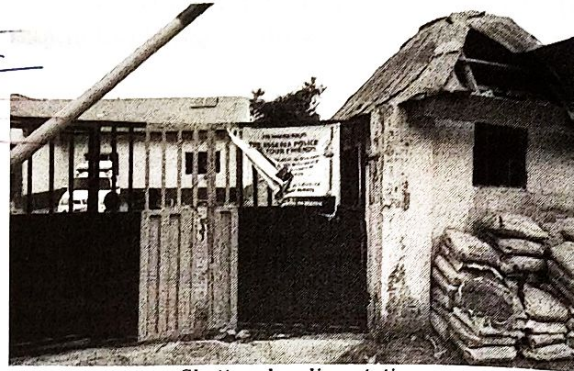
While security operatives were being killed, civilian residents were also not spared. A source revealed that a civilian resident outside the police divisional headquarters was also killed. Although police confirmed three civilian casualties but some residents insisted that four residents were killed at Apomu by the gunmen in an attempt to escape while another one was killed at Ikire.

Meanwhile, a resident, Akinsola Jelili, said his car was forcefully snatched while with his wife and two children and that he escaped by the whiskers with his family when others arrived and distracted their assailants' attention.

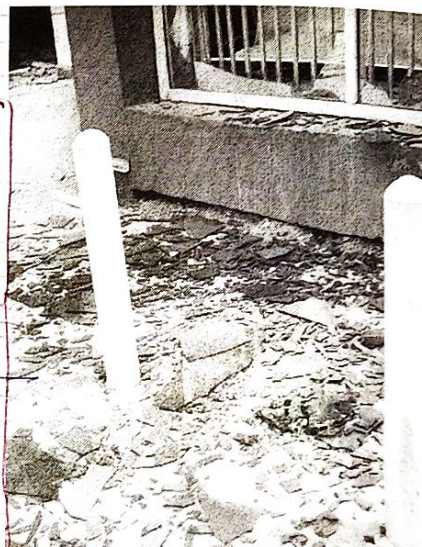
OPC, local hunters' efforts

The immediate past Chairman, Irewole Local Government Area, Mr Remi Abass, said the moment it was gathered that the police station was under attack, the community resorted to mobilising local hunters, members of the Oodua People's Congress, OPC, Agbekoya and others to defend the banks and other strategic places in the town.

"Upon hearing gunshots and dynamite blast around 6:30 pm simultaneously at four strategic places— at FirstBank, Divisional Police Headquarters, Ikire, Access Bank Apomu and Armoured Personnel Carrier stationed at Ikoyi, initially, we thought it was a casual



Shattered police station.



At the firstBank.

ry, not abduction

erience — School

driver told me that three men were on a bike and took the school bus from him at gunpoint. He was asked to lie and they abducted the bus attendant.

"The owner of the house where the incident took place happened to be an Assistant Commissioner of Police. So, immediately he called the police in Oba-Ile and the driver was taken to the police station.

"The police are on it, trying to see what they can do. I wrote my statement and the driver was left there so that he can be moving around with the police.

"We don't have any pupil on the school bus. None of our pupils has been abducted. It was an empty bus with the driver and the attendant."

Victim narrates her experience

Narrating her ordeal, the victim, Omolayo Ojo, said: "We were on our way to pick our first pupil when we saw Okada behind us. They were three of them. When I noticed that they were riding the Okada roughly, I told the driver not to engage them in any argument regarding the rough riding.

"Two of them came down from the bike, I saw gun and axe. I immediately told the driver that we should immediately use the vehicle's child-lock so that they won't be able to open the door from outside.

"At that point, they pointed their guns at us. We now opened the door and they dragged the driver out and told him to lie down."

robbery attack, but when I called the DPO, he told me the station is under attack.

"Almost about the same time, I was told the palace is also under attack. The Akire also called that the palace and FirstBank were also under attack. There and then, we began to mobilise local hunters, members of Oodua People's Congress, Agbekoya and Vigilante groups to defend the community before police re-enforcement arrived.

"The daredevil armed robbers were very strategic and with the way they operated, it showed that they had enough information because I and the local hunters numbering about 60 were at a meeting at the palace till around 6:25 pm when I was called that the armed robbers have laid siege to the two towns.

"As of today (yesterday), eight persons have been confirmed dead, three regular policemen, two Special Constabularies and three civilians.

We want government and security agencies to scale up their operation in the towns, especially in the area of logistics."

7 persons killed —Police

Spokesperson, Osun Police Command, Yemisi Opalola, confirmed that two policemen, two Special Constabularies and three civilians were killed in the unfortunate incidents. She said the Commissioner of Police, Olawale Olokode, has instructed that the perpetrators must be arrested and made to face the consequences.

As at the time of visit to the towns, yesterday, military personnel were stationed at different locations, including the crimes scenes.