

Gunmen kill 4, abduct hotelier, others in Awka

By Chimaobi Nwaiwu

AWKA—Four persons were killed in Ifite-Awka, Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State, when gunmen invaded the area, shooting sporadically into the air.

The incident, which caused pandemonium, Wednesday night, in the community forced residents to flee to their homes while traders hurriedly close their shops and scampered for safety.

Eyewitnesses told *Vanguard* that the hoodlums attacked several popular locations, including Book Foundation Junction, Ukwu Aki Bus Stop, "B" Bus Stop, Commissioners' Quarters and the Bamboo area of the capital city.

Newsmen, who visited the area, yesterday, gathered that during the attack, the gunmen kidnapped the manager of a popular hotel in Awka and his whereabouts still remain unknown at press time.

A trader, who deals on groceries, said on condition of anonymity: "It was a panic situation around 7 pm yesterday (Wednesday), when the hoodlums suddenly arrived and started shooting sporadically into the air.

"They shot and killed three persons at Book Foundation Junction and one person at Ukwu Aki Bus Stop. They also invaded a popular hotel at Commissioners' Quarters, and kidnapped the manager. Up till now his whereabouts is still unknown.

"We heard they were demanding N12 million ransom for the release of the kidnapped hotel manager. Although the hotel workers said their initial demand was N20 million before it was reduced to N12 million.

"I was at my shop when we heard gunshots. Everyone panicked and ran for safety. Traders locked their shops hurriedly, and as of today, many shops still remained closed."

The Anambra State Police Public Relations Officer, Tochukwu Ikenga, when contacted, seemed unaware aware of the incident, saying: "Thank you for this information, but if you know the relatives of these victims, let them come forward, please."