Pharmacy robbery was inside job

BEIRUT: The robbery of a pharmacy in Shiyah two months ago was an inside job, police said in a statement Thursday. Three employees at Mazen Pharmacy confessed, along with three other men, to planning and executing the robbery, making off with LL80 million which they divided, the statement said.

Mazen Pharmacy was robbed on Oct. 31 by masked armed men wearing gloves, who made off with the pharmacy's two cash registers. They left the scene in a silver BMW X5 with no license plate.

The statement said that the police arrested six men, three of whom worked at the pharmacy, and confiscated three guns and three cars, a BMW X5, a BMW NEWBOY and a VW Golf.

During questioning, the men, all of whom were identified by their initials, said that one of the pharmacy employees, M.N., bought a mobile phone to send a text message to his accomplices to notify them whem there were no customers in the pharmacy. The same employee was expected to arrive an hour before the robbery was planned to take place and gather the pharmacy's employees under the pretext of bringing them food.

Meanwhile, B.H. was selected to rent a car, remove its license plates and arrive at the pharmacy with a gun. Another accomplice, identified as A.M., bought the masks and gloves and carried the cash registers from the pharmacy to the car.

A fourth individual, M.D., was to distract the pharmacy's security guard and move him away from its entrance. The men chose the date and time, 3:20 a.m., of the robbery as the pharmacy's cash register would contain two days of revenue, while the pharmacy would likely be empty of customers.

The statement added that the suspects held the pharmacy's employees hostage and returned the rental car the following day after throwing out the masks, gloves and the cash register.

The suspects also confessed to carrying out a number of robberies in different areas in Mount Lebanon.

Separately, an armed man entered a pharmacy owned by Samar Ghorayeb Thursday in the Mount Lebanon town of Hadath, and forced her to hand over all the money in the cash register.