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**Nigeria: Car Dealer Dies Running From Customs**

Hisham Habib

3 March 2011

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Kano — A 42-year-old car importer, Rotimi Tawfiq died recently while running away from officials of the Nigerian Customs. It was gathered that the officials shot at the car he was driving and the car somersaulted.

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According to a witness, Mustafa Bello, who spoke to Daily Trust, he and the deceased were on their way from Katsina when they encountered a customs patrol vehicle, which accosted them. He said they told the officials that they were booked, but that they refused to listen and pursued them.

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some of our cars are with them and they have refused to accept duties. We see these cars with their girlfriends," he said.

Another car dealer, Hamisu Yusuf, lamented that while they were striving to employ themselves, they were being harassed by government officials.

He said when they reached a place called Ukuwa after Bichi, the officials started shooting at them to stop and suddenly he saw the car in which the deceased was driving swerve into a bush. He added that he went to Dawanau to park his car before taking a bus to the place, where the late Rotimi had the accident. The witness said he then took the corpse to the police station in Dawakin Tofa.

"This has been happening to our men and it is unfortunate. We cannot sit and allow these people to continue killing us without any justifiable cause. Right now, I can tell you that

and they have refused to accept duties. We see these cars with their girlfriends," he said.

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The vice chairman of the Kano Dealers Association, Alhaji Magaji Kura declined to comment on the incident, saying the union was still studying the situation. But the Public Relations Officer of the Customs Service, Bello Ibrahim Kwalli, said it was only an allegation as, according to him, police investigations showed that there was no evidence of shooting on the scene. He said that sometime ago, some car dealers formulated the same kind of story to gain public sympathy. He said the Kano command did not have men patrolling that area at the time of the incident.

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