

# Teenager Killed As Customs Officials Chase Smugglers

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**A 14-year-old-boy, Mushin Ibrahim, lost his life when a J5 Peugeot bus being chased by officials of the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) in Jibia rammed into bystanders on Saturday.**

Witnesses, according to Premium Times, said the bus was being chased by officials of the Federal Operating Unit, Zone B of the NCS when it crushed the boy around 11 a.m. at Jibia, Katsina State.

Jibia is on the Nigerian border with Niger Republic and many of its residents engage in cross-border trades.

The accident occurred around Tudun Wada Primary School, Tashar Huraira, in the town.

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“We were sitting in front of Mai Masara filling station when the accident occurred. The J5 driver was at high speed trying to run away from the customs officials when he lost control of the steering wheel and ran into a crowd but only the boy got crushed.

“We were lucky too. Other people were lucky to escape,” a witness, who simply identified himself as Buhari, said.

He said the customs van reversed and drove back to their checkpoint after the accident.

Nigeria’s border with Niger Republic had been shut down following the military coup against President Mohamed Bazoum last July, but smugglers have continued to bring in goods, including contraband into the country through unofficial routes.

“I was on the farm around 11a.m. when my nephew rushed to inform me of the incident,” Ibrahim Musa, the teenager’s father said.

“When I reached the scene, he was already dead. His body was severely damaged by the vehicle,” he said. Musa, a peasant farmer, said onlookers and other family members took the corpse to the Divisional Police Office in Jibia from where they were referred to the hospital where the boy was confirmed dead.

“The DPO asked us to make a statement and handed the dead body to us. He asked us to go and bury it since they had already taken our statement.

“I want the government to do justice to us, the Customs officials caused this because they were chasing a vehicle in a populated place like Jibia,” he said,

Musa demanded that appropriate sanctions be taken to serve as a deterrent.

The chairman of the Jibia Peoples Forum, Gide Dahiru, said the driver of the J5 told them that the soybeans in his vehicle were brought from Batsari and not the Niger Republic.

“The situation in Jibia is becoming confusing because we don’t know what the Customs officials are supposed to stop. Even if you bring in goods from Katsina or Kano, they stop and ask you for a bribe. If you refuse to give them, they will seize the goods and say it is contraband,” he alleged.

Jibia and other border towns in the state are no strangers to accidents involving NCS officials.

In August 2021, six people were killed and several others injured when a customs official vehicle rammed into onlookers while chasing rice smugglers.

The Federal Operations Unit Zone B Kaduna spokesperson, Isa Sulaiman, said the accident was not caused by Customs officials.

“I am aware that we have a team along the Jibiya Border that is within a 40km radius. The officials of the NCS didn’t cause the incident you are referring to as alleged; it was caused by the reckless driving of the driver of that J5 bus you are referring to. But some unscrupulous elements are hell-bent on twisting the narration,” he said in an SMS sent to Premium Times.

Sulaiman said: “Smugglers are unhappy with our resolve to ensure that illicit items do not find their way into the country” but the service would continue to enforce the directives of the federal government despite efforts to smear its name.

“We are a Service of repute and we sympathise with the families of the victims and an investigation is ongoing to unravel the cause of the incident in collaboration with relevant agencies. Whoever is found guilty will face the consequences of his actions,” he said.