

The police in Kwara State are still trying to unravel the mystery surrounding a shot that killed a passenger in a private car on the Ilorin-Igbeti highway. While the driver accused men of the Customs Service of firing the shot, the organisation denied it. The police are investigating, reports **BIODUN OYELEYE**.

Customs, man at war over shot passenger

WHO shot dead a man in a private car on the busy Ilorin-Igbeti highway, Kwara State. This is the poser policemen in the state are still trying to find an answer to.

Ibrahim Umar, the man in whose car the deceased was riding when the bullet hit him, insisted it was some customs men but Gideon Markus, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) and spokesman for the state command, said the identity of the alleged killers is still being verified. To him, Umar's testimony is one-sided until it is proved otherwise since nobody was on the scene with him when the deadly encounter occurred.

Umar, who works in the Governor's Office at the state secretariat, Ilorin, said he was on his way back from Kaima, his hometown, when he ran into the customs men who allegedly took the life of one of his kinsmen, whom he decided to help to Ilorin in his personal car, a Honda Civic.

His words: "I was coming from Kaima, my hometown. I had left Kaima about 7am and we got to Alapa about 10.30 am. It was immediately we left the area that I

heard a loud shot from a gun and when I looked back, I saw a customs vehicle chasing us. I parked and they also stopped and one of them came over to me but when he saw that the passenger behind me had slumped and blood was gushing out, he ran back and they started running towards Ilorin.

"I pursued them and after about two kilometres, they turned back, facing Igbeti. I also turned back to pursue them while making contacts with people in Ilorin to intimate them about what was happening. But when we got to Alapa again, it occurred to me that what I was doing was too risky since I had nothing on me to fight, so I decided to lodge a complaint at the Alapa Police Station.

"I was given a policeman to accompany me to Ilorin to deposit

KWARA

the corpse at the hospital while the DPO went after the customs' vehicle. The plate number of the vehicle from where the shot came, I think, is CS 256HQ, but I am not too sure of the figure, you know because I was already confused, whether it was 256 or 356. When we later saw the DPO, he said the number he saw was 356 and not 256 at the Igbeti base of the customs men, so he couldn't do anything."

Still visibly shaken as he narrated his experience, Umar said he only decided to give the deceased a ride as a kinsman, not knowing it was going to be the last for him. Asked what was the deceased passenger's

reaction when hit by the bullet, he said he did not make any noise, adding: "he just slumped on his seat".

"On examination, it was discovered that the bullet had hit him at the back of the head and came out from his left eye. He simply had no chance of survival as it were", he explained.

He said he was no stranger to the Kaima route since he has been going home every weekend in the last two years to see his family. The vehicle he was driving was thus not a strange one on the road and was even registered at Kaima. He asked for the exposure of those who killed the man he said was in his 40s. The deceased is survived by three wives and children.

Confirming the story, Markus said the police were still investigating the incident. His words: "what we learnt was that they were coming from Kaima, the customs men stopped them and they refused. They chased them and before you know it, they heard a gun shot which hit one of them. One customs man was said to have come down and when he saw the corpse, he ran back and the team ran away.

"There is no way we can say they are customs men, or not because we were not eyewitnesses to the event. The customs office here in Ilorin doesn't know them too. It could have been robbers in customs uniform because you know that the area is notorious, but it is only investigation that will prove who is what in the case. And when we finish investigation, we shall be able to know the exact details."

Although the deceased has since been buried according to Islamic rites, Umar said he wished that "those who killed my kinsman would be touched by his blood to come out and make the confession and free their souls from damnation".

NGO declares anti-abortion battle

From Benjamin Akpa

ANAMBRA

THE Anambra State Commissioner for Health, Dr. Amobi Ilika, has called on the people to stand up against abortion, obnoxious reproductive health initiatives, homosexual unions, diseases and murders.

Ilika made the call during a national conference organised by members of Pro-life Movement of Nigeria, a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), held at Madonna Renewal Centre Onitsha, Anambra State.

The commissioner urged both the Federal and state governments, as well as NGO and religious groups in the country to join in the crusade to save the life of the unborn child by fighting abortion.

Speaking on the occasion,

Chairman, African Anti-abortion Coalition (AAAC), Dr. Philip Njemanze said that over 10 million unborn children die yearly in abortions committed by medical doctors in both public and private hospitals in the country.

Blaming abortions for the high rate of maternal deaths in the country, Njemanze added that most of the proposed reproductive health policies are against pro-life programmes.

He asserted that each contraceptive a woman swallows destroys the unborn baby, stressing that more abortions committed lead to more poverty in Africa.

Njemanze also urged the par-

ticipants to be on the vanguard and take the initiative to fight the menace.

The Coordinator of the group, Reverend George Adimike explained that Pro-life is a worldwide movement for people who support life, its promotion and defends it against crimes against humanity, such as abortion and mercy killing.

He called on the state governments to be wary of grants they receive from foreign donors who claim to be promoting health programmes but have other hidden intentions against procreation.

The three-day conference attracted participants from Abuja, Lagos, Akwa Ibom, Owerri, Kaduna, Enugu, Ondo and other parts of the country.

THE Niger Delta militants that invaded Yenagoa, the Bayelsa State capital, last Saturday may have incurred some heavy casualties.

Five of them were reportedly killed by the soldiers who repelled them. Two of their boats were sunk and 30 suspects were also said to have been arrested.

In the about three hours operation that sent residents of Yenagoa into one of the greatest panic in the history of the state, the militants held the water-front of Yenagoa for almost one hour before they were repelled by the soldiers with heavy motor.

It was learnt that one of the wounded militants made his way to the Fange community but was immediately pushed out by the residents in order not to attract the wrath of the soldiers.

The soldiers also incurred some casualties. Four were reportedly killed by the militants. This development, sources said, made the soldiers to transfer their anger on the innocent civilians in Yenagoa: they mercilessly pounced on many commercial motorcycle riders, otherwise called *Okada* and passers-by around Hospital Road water-front.

Military check-points are now all over Yenagoa.

For now, although there is calm in and around the state capital. Businesses shut in the wake of the onslaught are gradually being opened.

Besides, the State Governor, Dr Goodluck Jonathan, target of the attack, said 30 suspects have been arrested by the Joint Task Force (JTF) in connection with

Five militants, four security men die in invasion

From Isaac Ombe

BAYELSA

the invasion.

They were seized in the state capital.

He also debunked the rumours making the rounds that the youth penetrated Government House, stressing that they were repelled and completely driven out of the state by the security forces.

Jonathan further disclosed that intelligence reports had it that the militants planned to scuttle the democratic process by blowing up the National Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) state headquarters, hotels and some major public buildings, adding that the militants were from the neighbouring states.

Jonathan accused some opposition politicians as being behind the attack.

According to him, those involved were bent on scuttling the elections, saying that the government was aware of all their moves, including the meetings held in Abuja and Lagos and how monies exchanged hands in preparations for the attack. He did not, however, mention names of the suspects.

