

Smugglers kill Customs officer, injure two others

SMUGGLERS have killed a Customs officer and injured two others at Idiroko border, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) has reported.

Ade Olafusi, an Assistant Superintendent of Customs (ASC) with the Customs Federal Operations was, crushed to death by a smuggler's vehicle when the driver attempted to force his way through a Customs post at Ajilete, near the border.

The Customs Area Comptroller, Alhaji Sahabi Sadiq, told reporters in Idiroko border that the daredevil smugglers arrived at the checkpoint in Ajilete in a convoy of vehicles loaded with frozen chicken and armed with dangerous weapons.

The customs boss said

when his men stopped the convoy, one of the vehicles, an ash-coloured Mazda 323 with registration number DS 616 LSD, suddenly sped off and ran over the customs officers in an attempt to escape.

One of the affected officers died instantly while two others were seriously injured.

The body of the dead officer has been deposited in mortuary at Idiroko General Hospital where those injured were hospitalised, Sadiq said.

According to the customs comptroller, the driver of the Mazda car that killed the officer was promptly

arrested and was detained with the car at Owode Police Station.

Sadiq said that other members of the gang escaped in the ensuing scuffle and abandoned four vehicles with the contraband.

The registration numbers of the abandoned vehicles are Toyota Camry PZ 663 KJA, Datsun Laurel LZ 730 MUS, Mazda PB 789 AAA and BMW SL 216 KJA.

About 6000 cartons of frozen chicken seized from the smugglers were destroyed and buried in graves in the presence of other security agents at the border.

Olafusi was the second customs officer to be killed at Idiroko border within one week after another officer was on October 25 shot dead in an accidental discharge during a scuffle between customs men and smugglers.

According to the comptroller, the command has lost three patrol vehicles within the past two months in an attempt to apprehend smugglers.

Sadiq said that three suspected smugglers who were arrested in another incident recently would soon be charged to court for allegedly attempting to smuggle contraband textile materials through Idiroko

border using a bullet-proof van.

The bullion van, with police registration number PF 3353 SPY, was impounded with the contraband while the three men were awaiting trial at an Abeokuta High Court, said the customs comptroller.

Sadiq said the customs has introduced the use of metal detectors to search persons and goods to forestall the importation of offensive weapons through the border in view of the recent bombing incidents in the country.

The comptroller assured that the customs would redouble its efforts at stopping unpatriotic traders and ensure the security of the country through effective policing of the borders.