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Man dies as Customs officers storm Saki

Posted by: Oseheye Okwuofu, Ibadan in News ⌚ 10 hours ago

Residents in fear

A middle-aged man has been killed in Saki, Oke Ogun, Oyo State, when Nigeria Customs Services (NSC) officers invaded Isale Adeen in the town and confiscated suspected contraband.

The officials shot into the air to arrest some suspected smugglers. A bullet hit the man, identified as Idowu.

He was said to have been buried, according to Islamic rites. Four others were said to have been injured in the fracas.

The officers were said to have discovered a warehouse, where suspected banned goods such as rice and other products were hidden.

It was learnt that 10 Hilux vehicles and an Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) were stationed around the area to prevent a reprisal.

Residents said owing to the tension, they could not move out freely.

A resident said: "The presence of the Customs officers is worrisome. The sporadic shooting and its effect was another. I learnt the officials suspected a warehouse they came to raid.

"We are not saying they should not raid. It is their legitimate role, but they should do so with peoples' rights in mind. They can impound and arrest, but not shoot and kill.

"Smuggling is bad, but the problem many people here are facing is that everybody is now a smuggler.

"If my relatives in Ogbomoso or Oyo ask me to buy rice and bring for them, and it is seen in my car, I would be seen as a smuggler. That should not be the case.

"Everyone has rights under the law but with this invasion, the rights of many people here have been violated.

"This is an agrarian community. Many farmers are afraid to go to their farms. If the government makes provision for planting of rice in large scale, many of our youths would be meaningfully engaged and the issue of smuggling would be minimised," he said.

No Customs official could be reached for comments.

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