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Customs' terror in Oke-Ogun

Posted by: Femi Oyedemi(PhD.) in Letters 13 hours ago

SIR: It has become imperative to cry out about the high-handedness and cruelty associated with the operations of officials of Nigeria Customs Service in Oke-Ogun area of Oyo State. The Customs and Excise Duties Act empowers the department to generate revenue for the government, but that Act does not empower it to perpetrate activities inimical to people's lives and well-being.

That is exactly what the organization is doing in Oke-Ogun area of Oyo State.

Not too long ago, a war-like invasion of a supposed smugglers' hide-out in an area in Saki resulted in the death of an innocent man who was passing by. The horrendous act has not been redressed up till today.

Again, on Sunday April 19, along Saki-Ago Are road, tragedy struck when a customs patrol van attempted to force a suspected vehicle smuggler to a halt on the highway. Owing to the driver's intransigence, the patrol vehicle butted the Volkswagen Golf 3 from the side thus violently causing the vehicle being chased to veer-off its own lane only to collide with an on-coming vehicle. The driver of the Volkswagen Golf 3 died instantly while the six occupants of the Nissan car coming from the opposite lane sustained serious injuries. The physical and emotional damage caused by this inhuman and inhumane act is better imagined than narrated.

It is time to curb these hellish and cruel acts by customs men to avert unwarranted loss of human lives and stave off a possible face-off between communities in the area and customs service. Customs men need to be reminded that only the living, and not the dead, pay customs duties.

• **Femi Oyedemi(PhD.)**

The Polytechnic, Ibadan.



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