

Outrage over Customs' alleged killing of artisan

Posted By: [KUNLE AKINRINADE](#) On: May 13, 2017 In: [Crime Diary](#)

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The alleged killing of an artisan by customs men in Atan area of Ogun State has sparked a row between the victim's family and Customs area command, reports KUNLE AKINRINADE

AN end appears not in sight to the dust generated by the alleged killing of a 27-year-old artisan, Sheriff Ajibose, by men of Ogun Customs Area Command. Ajibose was allegedly killed by operatives of the Customs Service during a clash with suspected smugglers at the Tollgate end of the Lagos-Abeokuta Expressway on Tuesday. The incident resulted in an attack on a Customs checkpoint at the Atan section of Ota-Ildiroko Road during which about five vehicles were destroyed. Ajibose's family members, however, insisted that their son was not a smuggler and demanded justice for his killing. "He was not a smuggler," said Hon. Solomon Ajibose, spokesman of the victim's family.

"He was a vulcaniser and was running an errand for me when he ran into the heartless customs men that shot him dead. "He was never a smuggler. Contrary to the official statement of Ogun customs, he was not carrying any item or goods at the time he was killed in cold blood. "I had sent him on errand to collect some money from me at my mother's place in Ikeja when he ran into the customs patrol and they shot him dead on the allegation that he was a smuggler. "He left his residence at Obere area of Atan in Ado Odo/Ota Local Government Area in a Lexus car and was heading towards Lagos when he ran into Customs patrol around the Toll Gate.

"They gunned him down and turned around to say that he was a smuggler. "He was shot in the neck and killed as if he was a fowl just, one month after his wife was delivered of a new baby. "We have photographs to prove that he was shot dead. It is sad that Customs published in a national newspaper that he was killed during an exchange of gunfire. "Who will now take care of his family now that they have snuffed out his life? "As a family, we will not take it easy with Customs authorities over his killing. We are prepared to pursue the matter until justice is done.

“The customs men were not properly trained to handle fire arms and their inadequate training has resulted in senseless killing of innocent people. “Even if he was a smuggler, are Customs operatives mandated to kill an unarmed smuggler? I repeat, Sheriff was never a smuggler and Customs unnecessarily labelled him to prove a point that they are working.” He added: “All we want is justice and nothing but justice. It is high time customs men stopped killing our youths all in the name of law enforcement. “Sheriff was not armed at the time he was senselessly killed by Customs operatives. “Our political leaders, including Governor Ibikunle