

## One Feared Dead As Customs, Smugglers Clash In Owode, Ogun

Irate youths attacking our officers - Customs

Customs desecrated holy sites, shot at us - Mob

By Tola Adenubi - Lagos Last updated Jan 22, 2019

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Pandemonium was let loose on Tuesday in Owode, Ogun State when irate youths marched on formations of the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) located in Ajilete following an unsuccessful raid on a Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) parish by Customs officers on Monday which left one of the smugglers sustaining gunshot wound and five Customs officers injured.

Customs officials had stormed the CCC church on Monday after discovering loads of smuggled bags of rice hidden in vehicles parked inside the church premises by suspected smugglers but were unable to cart away the banned items due to resistance by irate youths purportedly mobilised by the smugglers.

When **Tribune Online** passed through Owode, heaps of burn fire were seen on the roads leading from Owode to Olorunda, with angry youths stopping every vehicle in a stop-and-search commando style, looking for Customs officers to attack.

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Speaking to the **Tribune Online** exclusively, one of the youths explained that Customs officers shot and killed one Kunle on Monday after youths tried to stop the Customs officials from carrying out a raid in the house of God, the CCC church.

"They wanted to ransack the house of God, but we stopped them and they started shooting. One of our colleagues, Kunle is dead. We have mobilised today to teach them a lesson," the angry youths told **Tribune Online** exclusively.

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When contacted, the Spokesman of the Ogun Command of the NCS, Abdullahi Aliyu Maiwada explained that Customs officers shot in self-defence after being attacked by the youths mobilised by the smugglers.

Speaking to **Tribune Online**, Maiwada Stated that, “as I speak to you, the situation is still not under control because a mob is threatening to attack our formation in Ajilete.

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“The genesis of the whole issue started on Monday when our officers attempted to evacuate smuggled bags of rice from a CCC church in Owode. The smugglers mobilised the youths of the town and they attacked our men with dangerous weapons. Our men had to defend themselves by shooting to scare away the marauding mob.

“The youths attacked our officers with dangerous guns, stones, cutlasses and many other dangerous weapons. We had to defend ourselves, and our only means of defence is our rifles.

“Our officers had to do what we call ‘tactical withdrawal’ on Monday. Our men shot in the air to disperse the marauding mob and later withdraw back to our formation.

“Our rules of engagement allow our men to use their rifles if every other means of reconciliation fails. We needed to control the situation and defend ourselves. All this happened yesterday.

“However, today (Tuesday), the youths again mobilised themselves and started doing stop and search, looking for Customs officers to maim, because they were all armed with dangerous weapons.

“As I am talking to you, this mob have closed down the roads, looking for our men to attack. The situation is not currently under control and most of our men have withdrawn to Ajilete for safety reasons.

“Right now, we hear that the Army and Police are battling to prevent them from advancing to Ajilete.

“I cannot confirm if anybody died yesterday or was injured, but what I know is that our officers responded to attack by unscrupulous members of the public with the use of their rifles, and that is backed by our rules of engagement.

"On the 5th of January, 2019, we lost one of our officers to smugglers induced mob action, and we would not allow such situation to repeat itself again."