

# Suspected smugglers kill Customs officer

Segun Olatunji,  
Abeokuta

**S**uspected smugglers on Tuesday night killed a Customs officer in an attempt to beat a roadblock mounted by law enforcement agents on patrol at Ihunbo in Ipokia Local Government Area of Ogun State.

The deceased, whose name was A.A. Abubakar, was a principal inspector of Customs as at the time of his death. He was allegedly knocked down when he tried to stop a speeding vehicle conveying suspected smugglers.

The Area Comptroller of the Ogun State Command of the Customs Service, Mr. Bamidele Akande, told journalists on Friday that the late Abubakar and his colleagues were searching a vehicle they had earlier intercepted when another car sped towards them and knocked him down.

Akande said that the police had already launched an investigation into the

accident that led to the Customs officer's death.

"Abubakar was knocked down by a vehicle while on duty. It was an accident. The police are investigating the incident. That is all I have

to say for now. The vehicle was not intercepted, so we cannot say the driver was a smuggler or an ordinary motorist.

"When this accident occurred, the deceased

and his colleagues had intercepted a vehicle and they were searching it when this vehicle suddenly veered off and knocked him down and of course, sped away," he said.

## AU countries far from consensus on chairperson

John Alechenu, Addis Ababa

**M**ember countries on the African Union are unlikely to reach a consensus anytime soon on who leads the 53 member strong body as regional blocks in West and Southern Africa; continue to harden their positions.

The Economic Community of West African States backed by the regional power-Nigeria, is championing ECOWAS' cause of having the incumbent Chairperson, Dr. Jean Ping retain the position for a second term.

This position is tightly contested by the Southern African Development Community driven by

South Africa, which is sponsoring an estranged wife of the South African President, Jacob Zuma, as it candidate for the job.

## Tanker fire: Death toll rises

Chukwudi Akasike,  
Port Harcourt

**T**he death toll has risen in the fire incident caused by fuel tanker that exploded at Okogbe community in Ahoada East Local Government Area of Rivers State.

No fewer than 13 persons died on Friday, even as the residents of the area continued to count their losses.

The Zonal Coordinator,

The current position assumed by the two regional powers is likely to result in another stalemate, which may pave the way for yet another postponement of the elections.

South-South, National Emergency Management Agency, Dr. Umesie Emenike, in a telephone interview with *SUNDAY PUNCH* on Friday, said the death of the 13 victims in three different hospitals in Ahaoda had increased the death toll to 108.

A fuel tanker filled with 33,000 litres had fallen into a ditch as it tried to avoid hitting a Toyota Corrola on the Ahoada-Mbiama area of East-West Road.

Hundreds of villagers, who had gone to scoop