

Two Customs men die in Akwa Ibom crash chasing smugglers

Published [February 25, 2020](#)



File photo

Patrick Odey, Uyo

Two men of the Nigeria Customs Service attached to the Oron Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, reportedly died in an auto crash on Sunday while pursuing a bus suspected to be carrying smuggled rice.

Two other customs officers and the driver of the bus being chased were said to have sustained varying degrees of injury in the accident.

The survivors were reportedly rushed to hospital for treatment.

PUNCH Metro gathered that the incident occurred around 4.30pm at Urue Ita along Eket Oron Road in Oron LGA.

An eyewitness, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told our correspondent on Monday that the bus the officers were pursuing was later found to be without any bag of rice.

According to him, the Hilux vehicle conveying the customs officer, marked ‘Strike Force Team,’ hit the Sienna bus, with number plate, APP 784 FM, and somersaulted several times.

“When I inspected the Sienna bus, no single grain of rice was in it. The bus was returning from a church in Oron,” the source added.

The customs command in Akwa Ibom State, however, declined comments on the matter.

The spokesperson for the command, Charles Orbih, when given the details of the incident, refused to either deny or confirm the tragedy.

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The Federal Roads Safety Corps, Akwa Ibom State, stated that the command had yet to get full information on the accident.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, CSP Nnudam Fredrick, said the police in Oron had yet to brief him.

“I have not been briefed by the police in Oron concerning the death of the two customs officers. I am not in the picture and I am not aware of the incident,” Fredrick said.