

# Bystander killed as Customs, smugglers clash in Ogun

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•One of the injured officers

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A bystander lost his life after being hit by a stray bullet when some Nigerian Customs Service officers clashed with smugglers in the Obada Idi-Emi area of Imeko-Afon Local Government Area of Ogun State on Monday.

*PUNCH Metro* gathered from a resident who pleaded anonymity on Tuesday that the incident occurred in the early hours of the day.

The resident noted that residents were thrown into panic following repeated gunshots that accompanied the scuffle.

The resident said, “There was a violent confrontation between Nigerian Customs Service officers and suspected smugglers in Obada Idi Emi, Imeko-Afon.

“The clash occurred early this morning, with sporadic gunfire exchanged between the two groups. A resident identified as Kazeem was hit by a stray bullet and lost his life.”

The Public Relations Officer of the Ogun Area 1 Command of the Nigeria Customs Services, Hammed Oloyede, confirmed the incident in a telephone conversation with our correspondent on Tuesday.

Oloyede while narrating the circumstances behind the incident noted that officers of the command had received intelligence about a smuggling activity of some foreign rice and they trailed the vehicle.

He added that when the driver of the vehicle observed that he had been trailed, he abandoned the smuggled item and the vehicle in a bid to evade arrest and fled the scene.

Oloyede narrated, “On Monday, November 25, 2024, at about 1109hrs, the operatives of Nigeria Customs Service, Ogun Area 1 Command received credible information on a Mazda 323 laden with bags of Imported rice. A surveillance team was deployed in a private vehicle to trail and give real-time updates on the Information.

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“Upon confirmation, The team with the official patrol vehicle swung into action along the bush paths of Owode-Obada and intercepted one MAZDA 323 loaded with foreign rice of 50kg each at the said Owode Obada axis. The driver abandoned the vehicle upon sighting the official patrol vehicle and managed to evade arrest.

“While conveying the intercepted vehicle with foreign rice to the Government Warehouse for documentation, the intercepted vehicle broke down at Obada town. Given the volatile nature of the area, the team leader directed that the intercepted rice be evacuated into the official patrol Hilux.”

He stressed further that some suspected hoodlums attacked the officers while they were transloading the seized contraband which led to a free-for-all between the officers and the hoodlums.

The Ogun Customs PRO added that during the ensuing melee, the customs officers fled the scene to ensure their safety.

Oloyede noted that the command however got a report that one person was killed in the incident and added that an investigation has commenced into the matter.

“During the melee that ensued which threatened the lives of the patrol officers, they were forced to scamper for safety and withdraw to manage the situation.

“The team leader and another officer sustained injuries on their leg and arms. The officer with severe injuries is receiving treatment at a medical facility, while the intercepted vehicle and private vehicle used for surveillance were all vandalized by the mob. In addition, the patrol vehicle suffered minor damage.

“Information reaching the Command after the incident revealed that, unfortunately, a life was lost during the fracas. Investigation is ongoing into the incident for necessary action.”