

Residents protest, barricade road as Customs kills 3, injures many in Ogun

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From **Laide Raheem**, Abeokuta

Scores of residents of Ayetoro community, headquarters of Yewa North Local Government Area of Ogun State trooped out yesterday to protest the alleged killing of two persons and injuring of several residents by the special anti-smuggling taskforce of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS).

The protesters also barricaded major roads that lead to the town.

Daily Sun gathered that the incident forced some residents to flee their homes following the house-to-house search for suspected smugglers by the combined team of the military personnel and the customs operatives.

According to a source, the victim identified as Sola Soga was killed by stray bullet allegedly fired by an officer of the NCS in Kikelomo Area of Ayetoro town.

It was further gathered that men of the NCS stormed the area following a tip-off on smuggling activities going on in some parts of the town.

The source said: "The NCS invaded the area with lorry loads of its men; they had loaded all the rice stocked in a warehouse in the area. But as they were about to leave the town, the owner of the warehouse approached them for a possible settlement, but in order to forestall possible attack, an unknown custom man fired a shot to scare him away, which resulted in the death of Soga.

"The shooting elucidated a lot of resistance from the youths who barricaded all the roads leading to the town. It was then that the customs men called for reinforcement from their men in other areas like Idiroko and stormed the town and started shooting sporadically into the air.

"The boy (Soga) was far from where the customs officers were when one of them fired a gun at him from long distance and the bullet hit him in the chest. He died immediately. There was no smuggled rice in the car when the Customs personnel got to Ayetoro, but I believe that they acted on information.

"The situation in Ayetoro is so tense now as NCS officers and soldiers moved from house-to-house threatening residents to come out and be killed."