

4 killed in road accident as mob razes Customs vehicles in Sokoto

By **Steve Agbota**

IRATE mobs have set ablaze no fewer than two vehicles belonging to Nigerian Customs Service in Sokoto state, after four persons were killed in a road crash that involved three commercial vehicles in the state.

Daily Sun learnt that the fatal accident occurred at a checkpoint mounted by personnel of the Nigerian Customs Service, Asara unit of Illela Border Command in Sokoto state.

An eyewitness said the affected vehicles- two Toyota Aven-sis and a Golf Salon collided while trying to evade a stop and search of the Customs officials at the checkpoint.

The source hinted that the driver was alleged to have loaded some contraband goods that included rice and vegetable oil and was trying to evade an arrest.

One of the drivers was carrying goods like rice and vegetables from Illela border and eventually ran into Customs checkpoint located at Asara village.

The Customs blocked the driver in a bid to stop the vehicle for a search and that caused the driver to lose control and ran into an oncoming vehicle resulting to a fatal head-on collision while the one coming from the back crashed in between the two.

Four persons were confirmed dead on the spot in two of the vehicles and six people sustained various injuries during the accident. The injured persons were later taken to Gwand-abawa General Hospital for medical treatment.

However, some unscrupulous elements who disguised as sympathizers mobbed our officers at the point and in the process set one Patrol vehicle and private vehicle belonging to one of the officers ablaze.

In order to contain the situation from further escalation, the Customs Area Controller, Comptroller Abdulhameed Ma'aji sent a reinforcement team who succeeded in restoring law and order in the area. Confirming the incident, Customs spokesman in the state, Tahir Balarabe described the incident as unfortunate, saying that two vehicles belonging to the Customs Service he said the customs officials were only carrying out their legitimate duties by preventing the entrance of contraband into the country as stipulated by the Customs and Excise law.

However, the Area Controller while sympathising with the victims of the accident, appealed to the General Public to always support the Service in its effort to block all uncustoms goods from coming into the country through the borders.

"As we all know, the country is currently experiencing security challenges and Customs cannot do it alone. Hence everybody has a role to play," he said.