

Katsina Customs officer killed in mob attack

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From **Agaju Madugba**, Katsina

An officer with the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) in Katsina was reportedly killed, yesterday morning, by a mob in Kaita Local Government Area of the state.

A witness said the deceased allegedly fired gunshots into a moving truck loaded with goods and passengers, killing one of the occupants of the vehicle, at the Dankama border community, along the Katsina-Kaita road.

The Katsina Customs Public Relations Officer, Tahir Balarabe, who confirmed the incident, said that, “a mob action at one of our outposts led to the killing of the Customs official.”

A source at the scene said: “The vehicle loaded with goods and passengers was moving from Katsina town to Dankama when they were ordered to stop by Customs officials. But the driver did not stop immediately, following which one of the Customs officials fired some shots with his gun at the moving vehicle.

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“A bullet struck one of the passengers in the hips and he began to bleed profusely. The driver of the vehicle then stopped the vehicle. When the passengers saw that one of them had been shot, they all came down and accosted the customs officials.

“They were able to identify the official who fired the shots. An argument followed and the passengers descended on the Customs official and beat him to death, while his colleagues fled the scene.”

The source identified the slain passenger as 27 years old from the Unguwar Zanguna area of Katsina metropolis. Fatalities arising from encounters between men of the NCS and the civil society have become legendary in Katsina, which shares multiple entry and exit points with the Niger Republic.

The NCS Border Drill patrol vehicles chasing alleged smugglers have been known to ram into and kill unsuspecting passersby in the process. At other times, as in the current Kaita incident, Customs officials fire live ammunition at drivers and in virtually all the cases, killing them along with passengers on the spot.