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Editorial

Customs officers kill school kids in Ogun

...TASUED shut, as students, police clash rocks Ijebu-Ode

From Moshood Adebayo, Abeokuta

Thursday, July 28, 2011

Hell was let loose yesterday in two prominent towns in Ogun State, Ijebu-Ode and Ilaro as men of the Nigeria Customs Service and the Nigeria Police at different locations allegedly killed three persons.

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In one of the incidents which occurred at Olohuntele, in Imeko area of the state, a Hilux Van belonging to the Nigeria Customs crushed students of an unnamed primary school. One of them died instantly. The customs vehicle which was said to have been occupied by officers of the NCS was said to be chasing smugglers when the incident happened throwing the rural community into confusion as residents scampered for safety.

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Three-year-old Islamiyat Babatunde who was accompanying her siblings from school died on the spot after the customs van rammed into her and two others.

Although Islamiyat's sisters, Alilat Babatunde, 12 and Faisat Babatunde, 5 sustained severe injuries, one of them was said to have died later in the hospital where they were rushed to.

The unfortunate incident which occurred at about 2pm after school hours was said to have occurred as some smugglers attempted to beat custom officers with their contraband.

The customs officers on duty, driving menacingly in their attempt to chase the smugglers in their van, rammed into the Babatunde siblings who were returning from a nearby school.

Confirming the incident, the Customs Public Relations Officer, Mr. Nicholas Ngige told journalists on phone that the incident was just an accident. He said, "It was an accident. It can happen to anybody. It happened after our men have made a seizure and all of a sudden, the students, they were even more than three, just crossed the road," he explained.

In another development, students of Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED), Ijagun, Ogun State yesterday trooped to the streets,

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protesting the killing of one of them by the police. The protest paralysed commercial activities in Ijebu-Ode and nearby communities as the protest was said to have been hijacked by suspected members of cult groups within the town.

The deceased, identified as Olawale Musiliu Lasisi, was shot dead on Tuesday evening by policemen who were haunting some suspected cult members who allegedly molested and raped some of the university's female students.

It was gathered that after the rape, the suspected cultists allegedly posted the nude pictures and pornographic video clips of their victims on Facebook and YouTube social networking sites, which sent tongues wagging among students of the tertiary institution.

The melee that followed the protest forced the management of the university to shut down the institution and also set up a panel to investigate the remote and immediate causes of the violence.

Addressing journalists yesterday, the state Police Commissioner, Mr. Nicholas Nkedem confirmed that two female students of TASUED reported the illicit act and molestation to the Area Command whose attempt at fishing out those behind the rape met stiff opposition from students and suspected cult members.

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It was during police's combing of the uncompleted building where the female students were raped within the campus that one Olawale Lasisi (a.k.a. Zigima), a 200-level History and Diplomatic Studies student, fell to police bullets, he said.

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