

Customs Officers Shoot Passenger Dead over N5,000 Bribe

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By Chinedu Eze

Customs officers along Benin-Asaba road yesterday killed a young man in a passenger bus.

The deceased was said to be coming from Lagos with other passengers when the officers stopped the vehicle and demanded a N5,000 bribe.

In the ensuing altercation, one of the officers shot the passenger, a development that infuriated other passengers.

The passengers reportedly mobilised and prevented the officers from leaving the scene.

They also disarmed them before descending on them, according to an eyewitness who spoke with our correspondent.

However, the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has explained how a scuffle involving its personnel at Shagamu interchange, Ijebu Ode, led to the death of a young man it identified as Godwin by accidentally discharged bullet from an officer who was also severely injured.

Customs in a statement signed by its Public Relations Officer, DC Joseph Attah, said contrary to the reports making the rounds that a returnee Nigerian from eastern part of the country was killed when the vehicle he was travelling along with other passengers was stopped by the agency's officials and a disagreement over alleged request for bribe led to the killing of the passengers, the statement denied that such incident did not take place.

NCS admitted that its officer killed Godwin in the scuffle but further explained, "The attention of Nigeria Customs Service has been drawn to a disturbing video going viral with conflicting narratives. While it is painful and totally unnecessary to lose life in anti-smuggling operations, today (yesterday) at Shagamu interchange along Ijebu Ode, attempt to obstruct lawful performance of duty by passengers of a commercial bus (a white Toyota Hiace) suspected to be carrying bales of used clothing led to the death of a young man (Godwin) and serious injury of a Customs Officer, ASC1, Destiny Onebamho.

"Contrary to some narratives, the young man was not a passenger of the bus but a good citizen who always come to

fetch water for Customs Patrol men anytime they return to the base.

“Preliminary finding indicate that it was during the skirmishes and struggle to disarm the officer that the riffle discharged and hit the friend of the Customs (Godwin) who lost his life,” the statement said.

Customs also said that it was already in touch with the family of the deceased.

“Sadly, it should be noted that while attention shifted to the dead and the wounded, the passengers who filmed with inciting commentaries boarded their vehicle and left, leaving the wrong impression that it was one of them that was killed. While the wounded officer is under intensive care at the hospital, the patrol team has been recalled to the office for further investigation.”

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