

Smugglers crush police constable to death

BLESSING BALOGUN

SEME/Badagry Express Road, the main entrance into Nigeria from Benin Republic, is known for business activities and busy every hour of the day. It is also known to be a notorious area for smuggling activities. Efforts by the police to curb the activities of smugglers are to no avail. As a result, people around the border live in fear daily. Many lives have been lost on this road as a result of reckless driving by smugglers. Only recently, a clergy, Rev. Ajanesan, lost two girls from his compound along the express road opposite Sultan beach at a police checkpoint. The girls were sweeping the shed in which they sold various wares when they are allegedly ran over by vehicles driven by smugglers. The police too have fallen victim. The force recently lost one of its men while on

duty at a check point along the road to the smugglers.

The deceased who was identified as Bashir Mohammed was crushed to death by a vehicle being chased by a team of Customs officials. The 33-year-old Mohammed was until his death a police constable attached to Sapo Police Division along Seme/Badagry Expressway. The activities of smugglers were said to have led to his death.

When *Sunday Vanguard* visited the office of the Customs public relations officer at Seme, nobody was on hand to comment on the incident. Also the Divisional Police Officer, Seme Police Station did not comment. Sources, however, said that the driver of the smugglers vehicle that allegedly knocked down the constable and killed him was being detained at Seme Police Station. The incident has left people around Seme in confusion: they want to know who killed the policeman. Was it the

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smugglers or the Customs men? But a source who resides in the area claimed that the smugglers bus which allegedly killed the police constable was being chased by some Customs officials from Gbetrome checkpoint.

He narrated further: "On that fateful night of Friday, February 15, the smugglers bus carrying two bags of rice, two bags of Okrika (second hands clothes) and tyres was driving against traffic on Seme-Badagry Express Road trying to escape from some Customs

officials at Gbetrome checkpoint.

"While the Customs men were chasing the smugglers, the patrol vans lights were off and the smugglers also did not put on their vehicles headlights as well, so the chase continued in the thick darkness.

"Unfortunately, as they got to the police checkpoint directly opposite Sapo Police Station, the smugglers vehicle swerved into the middle of the road while trying to avoid the police they sighted suddenly and hit one of the police men on duty. But as soon as the Customs team got to the point and

saw the police man on the ground, they drove off."

The source revealed that instead of Customs men to help the policeman who sustained injuries and struggling with death on the ground, they drove to the next checkpoint at Gbagi, made a u-turn to their own checkpoint at Gbetrome, pretending as if nothing had happened. Meanwhile, the remains of the deceased policeman have been deposited at an undisclosed mortuary in Badagry area and will soon be taken to his hometown in Bazza (LGA) of Adamawa State for burial.