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Customs officer kills bus conductor

Written by Austin Ogwuda
Thursday, 15 January 2009

THERE was serious commotion at the Asaba end of the Niger Bridge yesterday morning following the alleged killing of a bus conductor, plying Asaba-Onitsha route by a Customs officer.

The incident sparked off protests by other conductors who mobilised in their numbers and other sympathisers who blocked the entire Asaba-Benin highway halting traffic for over five hours.

Our reporter who raced to the scene immediately after the incident reports that the situation was so tense that the angry protesters paid deaf ears to the persuasions to allow traffic flow while the protest lasted.

It all started at about 7.20a.m when a stray bullet killed a bus conductor. Eyewitness said that the killed conductor whose name was given as Arinze Nwachukwu, just returned from Christmas and New Year festivities from his home town, Aguleri in Anambra State two days ago only to meet his death.

The bus driver with number plate Anambra XC 220 JJT with his conductor had just bought fuel when they ran into the customs check point mounted by the disbanded toll gate at Asaba.

It was gathered that the Customs men shot at a truck which allegedly refused to stop for checking but unfortunately the bullet strayed into the bus and pierced the stomach of the conductor who died instantly.

As a result of the incident, other conductors protested by blocking the expressway, setting bonfires all over the place, thereby preventing free flow of traffic for over five hours.

A 504 peugeot car belonging to the customs men was burnt while the customs officers on duty at the check point fled the scene after taking off their uniform to disguise themselves as they escape.

They were said to have also shot into the air to scare people from rushing at them while escaping. State Police command's spokesman, Mr. Charles Muka, an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) said the act was committed by the Customs men, not policemen.

He said: " Our men are on the ground handling the situation as their (customs) vehicle was burnt while they (customs) ran." File-kill(14 January 2009)

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