



2 die in Ilorin as Customs men, smugglers clash

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ILORIN — There was pandemonium in Sawmill area of Ilorin, yesterday, as a result of a bloody clash between men of the Nigeria Customs Service and vehicle smugglers which allegedly led to the death of two persons.

The Kwara State Police Command, however, said only one person died in the incident.

Sawmill area is populated by vehicle dealers.

Vanguard reliably gathered that the crisis was caused by some vehicle dealers who were on their way from Cotonou, Benin Republic who allegedly disobeyed Customs officers who stopped them on their way to Ilorin and were, therefore, chased to the area.

When the Customs officers realised that the suspects were almost escaping into the crowd, they reportedly fired gunshots at the vehicles and left.

Another account also told Vanguard that the smugglers were also dealers in various kinds of cosmetics which they also packed into the vehicles.

The visit of Customs officers to the area and the gunshots allegedly annoyed youths in the area and some car dealers who mobilised themselves and barricaded some roads leading to Nigeria Customs Service headquarters behind Ilorin praying ground.

The aggrieved youths and car dealers were said to have been armed with dangerous weapons while on protest to the Customs headquarters.

But they met strong resistance from the officers and anti-riot Policemen who were shooting sporadically to scare the mob.

While the Customs officers were shooting to scare the angry mob, two persons were allegedly killed by stray bullets.

All roads leading to the Customs Service headquarters were blocked by armed Police officers and Customs officer, forcing the secondary school behind Customs Service headquarters to hurriedly close for the safety of the pupils.

While confirming the incident, the Kwara State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), ASP Ajayi Okasanmi, said there was a clash between Customs Officers and car dealers and confirmed that the clash claimed one person.

He said the corpse had been taken to the mortuary of the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital.

He said: "I can tell you that normalcy has returned to the area. We have commenced investigation, though no arrest has been made yet."

8 Customs officers escape death in Ogun

Meantime, at least eight officers of the Nigeria Customs Service, NCS, Ogun State Command, yesterday, escaped death when they were allegedly attacked by suspected smugglers along the Lagos-Sagamu expressway.

The incident occurred while the Customs officers attempted to intercept a truck loaded with 700 cartoons of frozen poultry products.

An eye witness told Vanguard that the Customs operatives flagged down the Onitsha-bound bus with number plate, EDO: USL 655 XA, conveying the contraband at Mowe-Ibafo axis of the expressway but the driver refused to stop and attempted to run over the officers.

Confirming the incident, Coordinator of the Customs Patrol Roving Team B, Chief Superintendent of Customs Cletus Okon said the contraband was intercepted after a fierce struggle with the driver of the bus.

The poultry products, whose Duty Payable Value (DPV) was put at N3.36 million was however, buried in the presence of government agents yesterday in Abeokuta.

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