

A-Ibom youths burn Customs' vehicle over death of cyclist, others

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By Chioma Onuegbu

Uyo—vehicle belonging to the Nigerian Customs Service, NCS, was set ablaze, yesterday, by aggrieved Uya Oro youths in Oron Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, over the death of a cyclist and his two passengers.

The NCS officers were said to have chased after a vehicle that was conveying three bags of rice for use in a funeral, when they shot at the vehicle's tyre.

An eyewitness, Daniel Frank, said the tyre which the customs operatives shot at, pulled out and hit a motorcycle which was at the left side of the vehicle and on speed.

According to him, the impact of the pulled tyre pushed the motorcycle under the vehicle that was struggling to regain control after losing a tyre.

He added that the cyclist and two of his passengers died instantly.

The eyewitness noted that the incident angered other cyclists, youths and other residents, who mobilised and burnt the customs Toyota Hilux vehicle.

His words: "Some people bought three bags of rice from Oron for burial. When the Customs operatives saw the rice, they tried to flag it down, and as the driver did not stop the Customs officers pursued him.

"As the chase continued, the operatives shot at one of the tyres of the vehicle. Unfortunately, the tyre they shot at pulled off and hit the motorcycle that was struggling to overtake the vehicle.

"The tyre hit the motorcycle and the force threw it under the vehicle that smashed the three dead instantly.

"It was from there that other cyclists and youths decided to attack them, but they escaped leaving their vehicle that was set ablaze."

Intelligence Officer, NCS, Mr. Joseph Adi, confirmed the incident.

He said: "It was this morning(yesterday) that I heard of what happened. Our office is at the water side in Oron. It was those standing at Uya Oro Junction, Federal Operation; I don't think they are resident customs.