

5 die, as Customs officers clash with smugglers in Katsina

By Bashir Bello

KATSINA—NO fewer than five persons were, yesterday, feared dead after a clash between officers of the Nigeria Customs Service, NCS, and smugglers in a village in Katsina State.

The incident, which took place between Mil Takwas village and Agangaro, the North-West farms along Jibia-Katsina Road, Katsina State, was said to have left several others with various degrees of injuries.

However, when contacted, NCS's spokesperson, Theophilus Duniya, said nobody was killed during the incident, except that two of his officers were injured by the smugglers and are receiving treatment at the command's clinic.

Duniya said: "Nobody was killed during the incident. In their normal reactions, if there was any case of death, they normally report or used the case against the actions of the officers, not minding the illegality and the criminality of victims involved.

"But unfortunately for us, two of our officers were injured by the smugglers. However, we intercepted 11 vehicles loaded with suspected rice and sugar."

Meanwhile, it was gathered that the incident that led to the death of the five persons occurred in the wee hours of yesterday, when the smugglers in their vehicles infiltrated the convoy of some All Progressives Congress, APC, party supporters heading to Katsina to attend the party's mega rally.

According to a source, the Customs officers, on sensing that the smugglers had taken advantage of the situation to join the campaign convoy, allegedly opened fire on the vehicles—five J5 and four Golf cars.

However, angry youths from the area took to the road to prevent commuters from assessing the Jibia to Katsina Road for hours in protest of the killings.

According to sources, it took the intervention of the Military to restore peace in the area.

At press time, the injured persons were said to have been taken to undisclosed hospitals in Jibia and Katsina Local Government areas.