

One dies, others injured as customs, smugglers clash in Ogun

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By James Ogunnaike

Palpable fear has gripped residents of Ayetoro community, headquarters of Yewa North Local government area of Ogun State following clash with suspected smugglers and Special anti-smuggling task force which left one person dead and many others injured.

It was gathered that the ugly incident which occurred on Tuesday morning had left the residents of the town to flee the town following the house to house search for suspected smugglers by the combined team of the military personnel and the Customs men.

Vanguard reliably gathered that one person, identified as Sola Soga was killed by stray bullet allegedly fired by an officer of the Nigeria Customs Service in Kikelomo area of Ayetoro, in Yewa North local government area of Ogun State.

It was gathered that men of Nigeria Customs Service stormed the area following a tip-off of smuggling activities going on in some parts of the town.

“The NCS invaded the area with lorry loads of its men, they had loaded all the rice stocked in a warehouse in the area. But as they were about to leave the town, the owner of the warehouse approached them for a possible settlement, but in order to forestall possible attack, an unknown custom man fired a shot to scare him away, which resulted in the death of Soga.

“The shooting elucidated a lot of resistance from the youths who barricaded all the roads leading to the town.

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” It was then that the Customs men called for reinforcements from their men in other areas like Idiroko and stormed the town and started shooting sporadically into the air.

Also, a source also confirmed that the NCS personnel acted on tip-off that there were smuggled rice stocked in the area.

He said Soga was shot from a distance by a trigger-happy officer.

“The boy (Soga) was far from where the Customs officers were when one of them fired gun at him from long distance and the gun hit him in the chest. He died immediately.”

“There was no smuggled rice in the car when the Customs personnel got to Ayetoro, but I believe that they acted on information.

The action of the Customs officers triggered protest in the town and they barricaded all roads that led to the town.

The NCS had to call for reinforcement from Idiroko and other areas in the command, as well as soldiers.

“The situation in Ayetoro is so tense now. As NCS officers and soldiers moved from house to house threatening residents to come out and be killed,” the source said.

Apart from Soga that was killed, I can confirm that bullets from the customs men hit several people as a boy not also far from the area was hit on his leg, he was carried to an unknown place for possible treatment by his friends.

“As I speak to you now, the whole town is in crisis and we need the intervention of government to call these custom men to order”

Efforts by our correspondent to get the reaction of the spokesperson of the Federal Operation Unit of the service, Peter Duniya, were unsuccessful as calls put across to his mobile number was not going through