

# 35 die in Niger tanker explosion



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• ***NGF commiserates with govt, victims' families***

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At least 35 people have lost their lives and many others injured while scooping petrol from a tanker that had an accident along the Agaie-Bida Road in Katcha Local Government Area of Niger state.

The accident occurred around 11am yesterday in Essan community along Bida to Agaie road.

Spokesperson of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Assistant Corps Marshal Olusegun Ogungbemide, stated that the victims were caught in a fire explosion while attempting to scoop fuel from a crashed tanker.

According to Ogungbemide, the crash occurred at about 12:15 pm when a tanker laden with fuel lost control due to the bad stretch of the road and overturned.

He said: "Moments after the crash, residents of the area reportedly trooped to the scene to scoop fuel from the fallen tanker. Tragedy struck when the volatile substance ignited, resulting in an inferno that consumed 35 victims and destroyed properties."

The Niger State Chairman of Tanker Drivers and Nigeria Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) National Ex-Officio, Comrade Farouk Mohammed Kawo, said the tanker was coming from Lagos.

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He lamented that over 30 tanker trailers had involved in accident within this month in that particular area due to the poor state of the road.

He said youths in the community have continued to scoop fuel and oil from trailers that have accidents on the road, adding that last Sunday, a tanker trailer carrying groundnut oil had an accident and its product was scooped.

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He appealed to the state government to urgently come to their aid by grading the particular area to ease movement of motorists and prevent loss of lives and properties.

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Niger State Governor, Mohammed Umaru Bago in a statement described the tanker explosion as worrisome, unfortunate, and pathetic.

“This is yet another painful, difficult, and tragic one for the people and the state government,” he said.

He said it is disheartening how people have continued to approach a fallen tanker to scoop its contents despite several sensitisation on the danger of such action.

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Bago urged people to place more value on their lives.

The Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) yesterday expressed sadness over the incident.

NGF Chairman AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq condoled with the people and Niger State Government, especially the families of the victims.

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“Our sympathies are with every family that is affected in this unfortunate incident. We commend all the emergency responders for their humanitarian assistance to the victims. This disaster again calls attention to safety issues in every aspect of our life. This is particularly important in how combustible items are stored and transported at every stage,” he said