

Christmas Day tanker explosion claims two lives in Lagos

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The exploded tanker. Photo: Facebook

By Uthman Salami

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At least two people were confirmed dead after a fully loaded 33,000-litre petrol tanker exploded along the Badagry Expressway in Lagos in the early hours of Christmas Day.

PUNCH Metro gathered that the incident occurred at about 4 a.m. on Thursday near the Oto-Ijanikin axis, close to the Lagos State University of Education.

Confirming the incident in a statement on Thursday, the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority said the accident involved a fully loaded tanker, which reportedly lost control while attempting to overtake another vehicle.

According to the agency, the tanker crashed and immediately went up in flames.

LASTMA's Director of Public Affairs and Enlightenment, Adebayo Taofiq, disclosed this in a statement posted on the agency's X page.

"Preliminary findings from security investigations indicate that the unfortunate incident was precipitated by excessive speed, as the tanker driver reportedly lost control of the vehicle while attempting to overtake another road user," the statement read.

"The vehicle subsequently crashed and erupted into a raging inferno, trapping and claiming the lives of the driver and an adult female occupant."

Taofiq added that LASTMA personnel, who were monitoring traffic in the area, responded promptly and professionally, securing and cordoning off the affected stretch of the road to prevent secondary accidents.

The agency also alerted the Lagos State Fire and Rescue Service (Ojo Unit), the Federal Road Safety Corps, and the Ijanikin Police Division for emergency response and security reinforcement.

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"In a critical intervention, LASTMA officers prevented members of the public from attempting to scoop spilt diesel from the scene, a dangerous act that could have triggered further explosions and fatalities," the statement added.

Following the containment of the fire, the severely burnt tanker was evacuated to prevent further traffic hazards, while the remains of the deceased were removed by the FRSC.

Reacting to the tragedy, the General Manager of LASTMA, Olalekan Bakare-Oki, described the incident as “deeply painful and entirely avoidable,” as he extended condolences to the families of the victims.

He urged tanker and articulated vehicle drivers to exercise caution, observe speed limits, and comply strictly with traffic regulations, while also warning members of the public against the hazardous practice of collecting spilt petroleum products at accident scenes.

“The Authority remains steadfast in its commitment to public safety and the sanctity of human life,” Bakare-Oki said.

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The inferno was said to have destroyed several houses and burnt multiple vehicles, throwing residents of the area into panic. Firefighters from the Ojo Fire Station were joined by their counterparts from Badagry in battling the blaze.

Also reacting, the Controller-General of the Lagos State Fire and Rescue Service, Margaret Adeseye, attributed the incident to negligence, noting that emergency responders had successfully contained the fire.

Adeseye said, “A male adult was recovered dead, while a female adult was rescued with severe burns at the scene of the fire.”

The incident came less than 24 hours after a fire outbreak gutted one of the floors of a popular plaza known as Great Nigeria Insurance House, located at Balogun Market, on Wednesday.