

Lagos-Ibadan nightmare: Tanker collision kills six, triggers traffic lockdown

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Six dead, several stranded after a multi-vehicle crash involving tankers, trucks and cars at the Ibadan Toll Gate section of the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway on Friday night...Photo Credit: Vanguard

By Daniel Ayantoye

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Hundreds of motorists and passengers travelling along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway were stranded for more than 10 hours after a multiple-vehicle crash involving tankers and trucks triggered a massive gridlock.

The accident, which occurred on Friday night, claimed six lives and brought movement on one of the country's busiest highways to a standstill.

The crash occurred at Eleja Bridge near the Guru Maharaji area of Ibadan, Oyo State, bringing traffic on both the Lagos-bound and Ibadan-bound carriageways to a standstill and leaving travellers trapped in their vehicles overnight and well into Saturday.

Many passengers were forced to alight from commercial vehicles and trek long distances in search of alternative means of transportation, while several motorists remained stuck in the endless queue of vehicles stretching across the highway.

The congestion also spilled onto adjoining routes, including the old expressway, as motorists desperately sought alternative routes to bypass the obstruction.

A Point-of-Sale attendant in the area, Kayode Adepoju, told *Sunday PUNCH* at about 6:33 p.m. on Saturday that the gridlock persisted throughout the day despite ongoing rescue and evacuation efforts.

“Everywhere is still blocked. It has even extended to the old road. The accident happened yesterday. Since around 8 a.m., when I got to my shop, everywhere has been blocked. It is serious,” he said.

A trader, Opeyemi Ojo, described the situation as chaotic, saying many commuters had no option but to continue their journeys on foot.

“Many people are trekking. They come down from buses and start walking. Even commercial motorcyclists are trapped in the traffic.

“Okada riders have also increased their fares because of the traffic. Some of them are charging between N3,000 and N4,000 to Iwo Road, something a Micra vehicle would normally charge N800 when there is no traffic,” she said.

Several videos circulating on social media showed long queues of vehicles stretching across the highway, while stranded passengers stood by the roadside or trekked through the gridlock carrying their belongings.

In one of the videos posted on *Instagram* around 1 p.m. on Saturday by gospel musician Dare Justified, traffic was seen at a complete standstill.

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He warned travellers to expect severe delays, saying a collision involving multiple tankers and vehicles had blocked traffic in both directions and left many commuters stranded since early morning.

Confirming the incident, the Director of Operations of the Oyo State Fire Service, Adeleke Adekunle, told our correspondent that six people died in the crash.

In a statement later sent to *Sunday PUNCH*, the Chairman of the Oyo State Fire Services Agency, Moroof Akinwande, attributed the accident to brake failure.

According to him, the agency received a distress call at about 9:29 p.m. on Friday and immediately deployed firefighters to the scene.

He said the crash involved six trucks, including gas tankers and trailer trucks, as well as two cars, triggering a fire outbreak.

“The agency’s officers promptly responded and deployed to the scene. Upon arrival, we discovered that the accident involved six trucks comprising gas tankers and trailer trucks and two cars, resulting in a fire outbreak.

“The fire crew quickly swung into action and restricted the fire from causing further damage to other vehicles and nearby properties,” Akinwande said.

He added that six bodies were recovered from the scene, while eight other victims were rescued and handed over to officials of the Federal Road Safety Corps for medical attention.

Meanwhile, the Public Enlightenment Officer of the FRSC in Oyo State, Oluwashola Busayo, said affected vehicles had been removed from the highway, while efforts were ongoing to transfer goods from one of the vehicles to facilitate complete evacuation and restore normal traffic flow.

He added that one injured victim was taken to a hospital for treatment.

In its First Information Report, the FRSC said 14 persons were involved in the crash, with one person sustaining injuries.

The commission added that its rescue teams, police officers and tow trucks were deployed to clear the affected sections of the highway and ease the gridlock.