

Christmas tragedy: 2 die in fuel tanker explosion in Lagos

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By Christopher Oji

It was a black Christmas in Lagos as a tanker loaded with diesel exploded, killing two persons and destroyed property worth millions of Naira.

It was gathered that a Mack Truck, conveying diesel at the early hours of Christmas day, at the Oto-Ijanikin axis, in the vicinity of the Lagos State University of Education (LASUED), inward Agbara, along the Badagry Expressway, Lagos, lost control while trying to overtake another vehicle and crashed into pavement and erupted into inferno.

The fire roasted the truck driver and another male occupant of the vehicle, believed to be the truck conductor.

The Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA), said, “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 vehicle subsequently crashed and erupted into a raging inferno, tragically trapping and claiming the lives of the driver and an adult female occupant.

A statement by Director, Public Affairs and Enlightenment Department of LASTMA, Adebayo Taofiq, explained that, “LASTMA personnel who were actively monitoring and managing vehicular movement within the corridor responded with remarkable alacrity and professionalism. Upon arrival, the officers swiftly secured and cordoned off the affected stretch of the expressway to forestall secondary incidents, while immediately notifying the Lagos State Fire and Rescue Service (Ojo Unit), Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) and the Ijanikin Police Division for urgent emergency response and security reinforcement.

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“In a further demonstration of vigilance and unwavering commitment to public safety, LASTMA operatives prevented members of the public who had converged on the scene with assorted containers from scooping the spilled diesel an extremely hazardous act capable of triggering further explosions and avoidable fatalities. This timely intervention effectively averted a potential escalation of the tragedy prior to the arrival of other emergencies and security agencies.

“Following the successful containment of the blaze and clearance by relevant authorities, the severely burnt tanker was evacuated from the expressway by LASTMA personnel to prevent further road

mishaps along the busy transport corridor while remains of burnt bodies were removed by the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC).”

The General Manager of LASTMA, Olalekan Bakare-Oki expressed deep sorrow and extended heartfelt condolences to the families and loved ones of the deceased, particularly poignant during this festive season.

He described the incident as deeply painful and entirely avoidable, reaffirming the Authority’s steadfast commitment to road safety and the sanctity of human life.

Bakare-Oki further underscored the urgent necessity for tanker and articulated vehicle drivers to exercise heightened caution, observe prescribed speed limits and comply strictly with all traffic regulations, noting that reckless driving and over speeding remain dominant factors in fatal road traffic crashes across the metropolis.

He also seized the opportunity to caution members of the public against the dangerous and irresponsible practice of scooping petroleum/Diesel products from accident scenes, emphasizing that such conduct poses grave and far-reaching risks to both individuals and the general public.”