

Niger Tanker Explosion Death Toll Rises To 39, 60 Injured

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Tanker explosion

...Bago mourns, Sanwo-Olu commiserates with Niger gov, victims' families

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has confirmed that at least 39 people lost their lives and more than 60 others sustained injuries following a petrol tanker explosion in Niger State.

The incident occurred on Tuesday in Essa community, along the Agaie–Bida Road in Katcha Local Government Area, after the tanker overturned and burst into flames. Reports indicate that several residents had gathered to scoop fuel from the fallen vehicle before it exploded.

In a statement, NEMA said, "Upon receiving the distress report, the Director General of NEMA, Mrs Zubaida Umar, immediately directed the Head of NEMA, Minna Operations Office, Mr Hussaini Isah, to activate the rescue team and deploy to the scene to support the Niger State Emergency Management Agency (NSEMA) and other responders in rescue operations.

"The explosion, which happened around 3:45 p.m. along the Bida–Badegi–Agaie Road, claimed 39 lives and left over 60 persons with severe burns, including men, women, and children," the agency added. While commiserating with the victims' families, Umar urged Nigerians to stop scooping fuel from accident scenes, warning that such reckless actions often lead to devastating loss of lives and property.

She further appealed to residents and motorists to avoid gathering around crash sites and to promptly notify emergency responders for proper intervention. Reacting to the tragedy, Niger State Governor, Umar Bago, expressed grief over the loss, describing it as "disheartening" that people "continued to approach a fallen tanker to scoop its contents despite several sensitisations on the danger of such action."

Also, Lagos State Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu expressed sympathy with his Niger State counterpart, Governor Mohammed Bago, the government and people of Niger State over the tanker. Sanwo-Olu, who is the Chairman of the South-West Governors Forum, also condoled with families of the victims over the lone tanker vehicle accident.

The governor in a statement by his Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Mr Gboyega Akosile, yesterday, said the incident is worrisome and pathetic.

He said: "It is with a heavy heart that I read and followed the development of the disaster that happened yesterday along the Bida/Agaie Highway in Niger State following the explosion of a petrol-laden tanker that reportedly claimed about 35 persons.

He said: "Our thoughts and prayers are with my brother, Governor Mohammed Bago, the Government and the people of Niger State, as well as the deceased families and victims of the sad incident."