

Trailer crushes 25 in Onitsha

By AL PHONSUS NWEZI

It was a black weekend in Onitsha, Anambra State, as about 25 persons were said to have been crushed to death by a trailer at the popular Upper Iwaka.

The brake of the trailer carrying iron was said to have failed, causing the driver to lose control of the vehicle.

The fatal accident provoked spontaneous reaction from hawkers and other people at Upper Iwaka who set ablaze one of the luxury buses they alleged caused the accident.

An eyewitness told *Sunday Champion* that the trailer which was coming from Enugu end, was blocked by two luxury buses plying one way.

As the trailer was trying to avoid the luxury buses, which have crossed from the other lane to the trailer's lane, the brake failed and the driver lost control of the vehicle which skidded off to the other side of the express way, crushing about 25 persons in the process.

When *Sunday Champion*

visited the scene yesterday morning, people clearing the dead bodies and debris said that 14 corpses were taken away Friday night immediately after the accident, seven yesterday morning and more were still being recovered from deep drainage system along the Express Way at the time of the visit.

The accident caused traffic jam along the Upper Iwaka part of the express way as vehicles coming from Lagos end could not move because the trailer had blocked the road.

Those going towards Owerri and Enugu found it hectic wading through the narrow way the police created for the vehicle to pass.

A team of policemen from Okpoko Police Station led by Divisional Police Officers (DPO) Mr. Tafida Saleh, were busy clearing the parts of the trailer, the consignment which the trailer was carrying to provide easy access for vehicular and human movement.

Saleh, when contacted, refused to comment on the accident, but the Onitsha Area Police Commander, Mr. Rasheed Akitunde, who confirmed the

incident, said that dead bodies were still being recovered as at yesterday afternoon.

Surprisingly, the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) whose statutory function it is to ensure safety on the high ways and whose office is just 500 metres away from the scene of the accident, (that is Head Bridge) did not surface at the place from Friday night when the incident occurred till yesterday afternoon.

Unfortunately, officials of the FRSC passed the scene of the accident to mount a road block at the Zik's round about where they were busy checking particulars of vehicles.

By VICTOR OGUNJE, Ado Ekiti

OGUN State Governor, Otunba Gbenga Daniel has thrown his weight behind the removal of the immunity clause that protects public officers from presecution. He however wants it limited to criminal matters.

He also commended members of Ekiti State House of Assembly for passing over 20 bills into law within a short period of its inauguration.

The governor made the assertion at the weekend in Ado Ekiti while delivering a lecture entitled: "Democracy, accountability

