

15 mourners, corpse burnt in crash

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Fifteen people died yesterday when a vehicle conveying a corpse home for burial was involved in a ghastly accident at Chikara village, near Koton Karfe, in Kogi State. All the 15 mourners and the corpse they were conveying were burnt beyond recognition.

Witnesses said a giant fireball shot into the sky when the bus conveying the mourners had a head-on collision with a car traveling in the opposite direction. The bus contained a 40-litre jerry can of petrol, which was found in the wreckage, officials at the scene said.

Mr. Joseph Kyauta, who witnessed the accident, said: "I heard a strange sound and it occurred to me that it was an accident. I mobilized people but we could not move closer to the bus because the fire was too much. The road

safety men came and rescued some people, who were taken to hospital, while dead bodies were given a mass burial by FRSC men, police and the environmental unit of Koton Karfe Local Government."

Road Safety officials said the driver of the Mazda bus conveying 13 mourners and the corpse was moving very fast, and he made a dangerous overtaking before returning to his lane. They said he however lost control and collided with a Volkswagen car, which was carrying five people.

Thirteen people in the bus and two others in the car were killed instantly. Four people were taken to Abaji General Hospital, where one died later. The other three have been taken to the Specialist Hospital, Gwagwalada. The people who died at the accident scene were buried at the roadside by government officials. They had been burnt to ashes.

The Abaji Unit Commander of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) Mr. E.D Adebisi, said officers spoke to one of the family members in the bus before he later died in hospital. The man told FRSC officials that just before the accident, his family members told the driver to reduce his speeding because it was raining, but the driver did not heed their advice.

On the same road last Tuesday, 17 people were killed and 12 others were injured in an accident that occurred at Manderegi village, along Kwali—Lokoja Highway. The accident involved a trailer loaded with cows and a flat body trailer loaded with cement. 15 cows were also killed in the accident, which led to hours of suffering by motorists before the road was cleared.