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## Day freak auto crash claimed 21

WRITTEN BY LEKE ADELERE, WHO WAS IN ADO-AWAYE

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On December 12, 2009, two vehicles coming from opposite directions rammed into each other, with horrendous results at Adeekola Oke, a boundary village between Iseyin Local government and Ibarapa South Local Government Councils. An eyewitness, one Mr. Bayo Adedokun, narrated the circumstance that led to the accident. He said the bus which collided with a lorry that carried planks was coming from Ibadan, while the bus was conveying 19 supporters of former governor of Oyo State, Senator Rasheed Adewolu Ladoja, who were going to represent him at two different functions.

The two teams who were in convoy decided to take Eruwa-Lanlate-Ado-Awaye-Okeho route being the most motorable road in that axis of the state, instead of going through Ibadan-Iseyin road that is deplorable and notorious for armed robbery attacks. The bus was carrying 19 passengers, among who were twelve women and seven men. The passengers were initially 20 but one of them had protested vehemently on the recklessness of the driver. He was forced to drop from the bus to join another vehicle in the convoy.

Many of the victims were members of the Ladoja-led faction of Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) in the state. The delegates were led by the younger brother of Governor Rasheed Ladoja, Alhaji Biliaminu, who lost two wives, Fatimoh and Kudirat in the accident. The driver was reported to have pulled out from the convoy on the complaint that the two vehicles ahead of him were not moving at the same pace with the rest in front in the convoy. He overtook the two buses and not quite five minutes later, it collided with the lorry carrying plywood. The two vehicles burnt completely, along with the passengers due to the intensity of the fire.

According to Mr. Adedokun, some of the local vigilantes along the route had cautioned the bus driver who had overtaken the rest of the vehicles in the convoy to beware of a dangerous bend ahead, but he ignored the warning.

Some passengers in other vehicles in the convoy had equally complained on the recklessness of the bus driver earlier. Passengers in the articulated lorry carrying planks numbered four. The driver and the plywood load's owner were trapped in the mangled wreckage of the lorry while the conductor, who is the only survivor, jumped out of the lorry, sustained some bruises and lost consciousness. The only woman in the lorry also lost consciousness until police arrived at the scene and conveyed them to a hospital.

Further attempts were said to have been made by other travellers, villagers and road users to rescue the victims, but the degree of the inferno, aided by a fuel tank's explosion, prevented the would-be rescuers from moving closer as they scampered for their own safety.

Adedokun called on authorities concerned, the Federal Controller of Works in Oyo State, State Ministry of Works and the local governments to provide signposts at strategic locations along all federal roads in the state as a measure to caution road users.

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