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13 burnt in Gombe tanker fire tragedy

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Thirteen people were burnt beyond recognition and nine others hospitalized following an accident involving a petroleum trailer tanker with a full load of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) that had burst into flame along Jekadafari road in Gombe, yesterday. Gombe State Sector Commander of Federal Road Safety Commission, Mr. Felix Osakwe said the trailer with registration number XB 157 RR belonging to A.Y Shafa, a dealer affiliated with Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation was carrying a PMS consignment for delivery to Gombe NNPC Mega Station.

He added that the driver of the trailer that was coming from Lagos lost control at about 1.30 pm at the center of Gombe metropolis, where the trailer veered and fell on its side and its contents spilled over into the gutter and onto the road, igniting the fire which led to the inferno.

According to him, the charred remains of the accident victims were deposited in State Specialists' hospital while those that had received serious injuries were on admission, receiving treatment.

He added that no fewer than five cars, 89 motorcycles mostly brand-new, about 40 houses and several shops were consumed by the fire. The Sector Commander said they could not ascertain the situation of the tanker driver as well as his conduct, saying his command was intensifying efforts toward ascertaining whether he was among those killed in the fire.

In a related development, the Chief Medical Officer of State Specialists Hospital, Dr. Jame Madi said his hospital had received a directive from the state government to give free treatment to all victims of the accident.

Mr. Osakwe lamenting that the poor attitude of the members of the public had hindered rescue mission operation as the state fire service were pelted with stones on arrival to the scene of the accident. He stated that the misguided behaviour was tantamount to causing more havoc, saying the rescue mission could only gain access to the scene through the help of armed mobile policemen.

Giving an eyewitness account, Malam Bala Sale said the public were forced to stone the fire fighters to register their grievances for their late arrival.

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