

5 die in Lagos petrol tanker explosion



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Five unidentified persons were yesterday roasted to death when a petrol tanker fell and exploded at the Ikorodu area of Lagos.

The accident occurred barely four days after a similar incident at the popular Mile 12 market where three persons were killed.

Witnesses said the tanker which was loaded with fuel had a brake failure while ascending a steep road leading to the Ikorodu General Hospital.

The driver tried to stop but it skidded off and fell, spilling fuel.

There were conflicting reports on the number of people who died. While some said those who died could be as many as 10, others said only five bodies were brought out. Witnesses said several other people sustained severe burns. The injured and deceased were taken to the Ikorodu General Hospital.

It was gathered that the tanker belonged to a petroleum marketing company and was on its way to supply products to filling stations along that axis.

A source said as soon as the driver realised that the brake had failed, he rammed the vehicle into a nearby abattoir at the peak period, accounting for the high casualty rate, witnesses said.

"As soon as the tanker rammed into the abattoir, it burst into flames which spread to other parts of the area. Both cows and human beings were roasted. Those who died included the driver, a shoemaker and some of the butchers," the source said.

Other victims of the fire included a commercial tricycle driver popularly known as Keke Napep and his passenger, who were burnt to death.

When the fire service came about an hour later, the crowd initially prevented them from accessing the abattoir, thus worsening the situation.

The angry crowd later gave way for the fire service to commence rescue operations, although at that point, property worth millions had already been destroyed.

At press time, the corpses had been deposited at the morgue while commercial activities had resumed in that axis, except in places cordoned off by the fire service.

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