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3 die, many vehicles destroyed in Abuja tanker accident

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Written by Adam Umar with Agency report Hits: 159

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Three persons including a tanker driver lost their lives on Monday at Zuba, a major entry point into the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

Witnesses, who spoke to our reporter, said the tanker which was on top speed from Madalla axis and heading toward the city centre, was attempting to ascend the flyover in the town when it hit a crash barrier by the side of the road. The impact caused it to somersault and empty the whole of its content in the area.

Four persons including the assistant driver of the tanker were among those who survived, while about 23 vehicles were destroyed at a garage opposite the scene of the incident, one of the witnesses said.

Toluwa Obafaye, one of the mechanics at the garage, told City News that apart from the driver of the tanker, other dead persons was their colleague, a mechanic, who attempted to take away a car from the garage which was already flooded with fuel, "he was not able to even open the car when the tanker burst into flames and within seconds the whole area was engulfed by fire."

The other person, who lost his life, according to him, was a customer who was burnt beyond recognition.

The injured persons were moved to the Abuja University Teaching Hospital, Gwagwalada by officials of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) for medical attention.

Mr Chidi Opara, a trader at a near-by market, blamed the level of damage on late arrival of the fire fighters, who were said to have responded about an hour after the incident.

He said Zuba town which was regarded as a strategic location, lacks firefighting station, and had been affected by a number of fire incidents mostly caused by tankers and other heavy trucks.

Mr Mutar Chow, the Zuba unit Commander of the Federal Road Safety Corps, Chow

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told newsmen at Zuba that the accident took place at the Zuba flyover on Monday while the driver was making a phone call.

The unit commander cautioned drivers to desist from making calls while driving their vehicles.

"It is highly unfortunate that commercial drivers, official drivers of government functionaries and highly placed people in the society are not obeying the rule of not making calls while driving," he said.

The Zuba Divisional Police Officer (DPO), Femi Adelagan, a Chief Superintendent, also confirmed the incident, adding that the tanker driver, who drove on high speed while negotiating to turn toward the fly-over, ended up summersaulting after hitting a roadside crash barrier.

Meanwhile, the Chairman, Gwagwalada Area Council, Alhaji Abubakar Jibrin-Giri, who visited the scene, expressed sadness over the accident.

Jibrin-Giri advised residents, especially those operating along the roadside to move 120 metres away from the mainroad, to avoid such incidents.

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