

■ Funeral prayers being offered for 12 children, who were killed during a Maulud procession at Malam Sidi in Gombe State yesterday

Photo: Rabilu Abubakar

Van kills 20 children in Gombe Maulud procession

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He said angry mob killed the driver and set the vehicle ablaze before police arrived the scene.

Confirming the incident, the Gombe State Command Public Relations Officer, DSP Ahmed Usman, said the accident occurred at 12 noon when a driver travelling alone in his car from Gombe to Bajoga lost control and ran into the children procession.

DSP Usman said eight were confirmed dead and 19 others were evacuated by the police medical team to Federal Teaching Hospital and Gombe Specialists Hospital for treatment.

He said the police had

launched an investigation into the incident and that they were also on the trail of those that killed the driver and burnt the car.

The police spokesman added that the combined operation of military personnel and Mobile Police Rapid Response Unit has restored law and order and normalcy had since returned to the town.

Meanwhile the funeral prayer for 12 of the children that lost their lives was held around 5:00pm at the premises of the Cottage Hospital, Malam Sidi.

The medical officer-in-charge of the Cottage Hospital, Malam Sidi, Dr. Ibrahim Dawaki, told *Daily Trust* that 24 injured victims were brought to

the hospital. He said 12 of them who were critically injured had been taken to Gombe for further medical attention.

Malam Muhammad, the father of one of the victims still receiving treatment at the hospital, narrated to *Daily Trust* how he learnt about the accident.

"My son left home in the morning with other students from his school to join other neighbouring villages to attend the Maulud procession in Malam Sidi.

"Around 12:30pm I was at home when information reached me that my son was involved in an accident. I quickly rushed to Malam Sidi devastated but fortunately he is

not injured, he only got some bruises," he said.

According to Malam Muhammad Usman resident of Malam Sidi, he was at the road side watching the procession in which his seven-year old daughter was participating, when suddenly a car rammed into it.

"My daughter was among the children in the procession when the driver lost control of his car and run into them. He marched many of them before he finally packed the car and attempted to run.

"But he could not escape he was apprehended by angry mob who set both him and the car ablaze," Malam Usman explained.

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