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Oil tanker explodes, kills 9, burns 54 vehicles in Lagos

By Kayode Ekundayo, Eugene Agha & Abdullateef Aliyu, Lagos | Publish Date: Jun 29 2018 2:50AM

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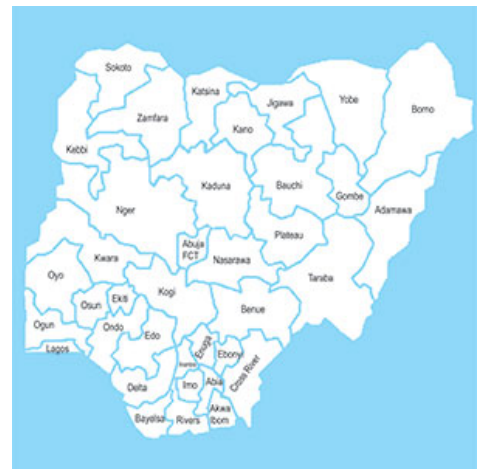
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Many people were feared dead yesterday while 54 vehicles were gutted by fire when a petrol-laden tanker crashed along the Lagos-Ibadan expressway.

The incident happened around 5 pm on the Otedola Bridge of the expressway with many motorists trapped, as the tanker which was leaving Lagos lost control and subsequently crashed and spilled its 33,000-litre content.

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Oil tanker explodes, kills 9, burns 54 vehicles in Lagos

This immediately triggered explosion, leaving many vehicles in flames.

While some occupants of the vehicles escaped, others were caught up in the explosion.

According to a report by the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), which was made available Daily Trust, the accident involved one tanker, five buses, two trucks, one tricycle and 45 cars.

The Sector Commander of the FRSC, Hyginus Omeje and LASEMA General Manager, Mr. Adesina Tiamiyu confirmed that nine people died while four people were injured with various degrees of burns.

The FRSC commander said, "It was a crash involving tanker fully loaded with petrol. I think it lost control and crashed. There was an explosion and other vehicles were involved. About 54 vehicles were burnt in the inferno that followed. Nine dead bodies were recovered. Four others including two critically injured sustained various degrees of burns.

"The situation now is that we are on recovery. The wreckages are being taken off the road. All the dead bodies have been deposited in the morgue. The injured ones have been taken to Ojota Emergency Centre. So the rescue operation is still ongoing and all the emergency responders are here".

'Casualty figure may be higher'

However, many said the casualty figure may be higher. Eyewitnesses alleged that the number of those who died in the inferno might be higher than 20 and those injured could be as high as 50 going by the number of vehicles involved. Emeka Ogwu, an eyewitness, said he was on his way home when the incident started.

He said "There was a huge fire after the loud explosion. People were running in all directions to avoid the area but some were trapped in their vehicles. In the confusion, some of them could not escape because they had their seat belt on and the doors of their vehicles were locked."





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Another witness, who said he drove a towing van at Ojodu Berger, Taiye Kazeem, told Daily Trust that the driver of the tanker might have lost control as he was descending the Otedola bridge and rammed into the road median before falling over and spilling the content of the tanker in the process.

Vehicles trapped in gridlock

The development also caused massive traffic gridlock in and out of Lagos State even as many vehicles going inward Lagos had to make a detour to avoid being trapped in the gridlock.

At about 5:30 pm, emergency officials including the State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA), State Fire Service, Federal Road Safety Corps, Nigeria Police, among others had mobilized to the scene. The fire service officials were also overwhelmed with the magnitude of the fire even as they were seen spraying water to disperse people trying to catch a glimpse of the incident.

At the time of filing this report, emergency responders were still clearing the wreckages of vehicles burnt in the fire as the road remained blocked.

Lagos commiserates with victims' families

Meanwhile, the Lagos State Government has commiserated with families of victims who lost their lives and property in the fatal tanker explosion.

The government, in a statement signed by the Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Mr. Kehinde Bamigbetan, described the incident as a sad development, saying that the incident was most unfortunate and regrettable.

“On behalf of the Lagos State Government, we extend our deepest commiseration to the families of persons who lost their lives as well as properties to the incident. Our thoughts and prayers are with them in this time of pain and grief.

“As a government, we would not relent in putting measures in place to ensure safety of lives and property of all residents,” Bamigbetan said.



The Commissioner said that Governor Ambode had directed all relevant agencies to move into the area to normalise the apprehension that had taken over the area and to also ensure that those in need are adequately taken care of.

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