

37 burnt to death in Bauchi, Nasarawa road crashes



■ The scene of Akwanga accident which claimed 17 lives

From Hassan Ibrahim (Bauchi), Ibraheem H. Muhammad (Lafia), Magaji I. Hunkuyi (Jalingo) & Muideen Olaniyi (Abuja)

1 A prince from Taraba State, Nuhu Hamman Gabdo, his wife, Hadiza Nguroje and her sister, Zainab, as well as his four children, Umami, Ayman, Firdaus and Abdullah, were among the 17 people burnt to death Saturday night along Akwanga road in Nasarawa State.

2 Twenty people also died in a separate accident in Bauchi.

Late Hamman Gabdo was the brother of the Lamido Gashaka in Serti.

They were returning to Abuja in a Sienna bus after a visit to Gashaka in Mambilla Plateau. Sardauna Local Government Area of Taraba State.

The late a Hamman Gabdo was a staff of the Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC) in Abuja and held the traditional title of Ubandoma of Gashaka Chieftom, Daily Trust learnt.

The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) yesterday confirmed the accident.

The FRSC Unit Commander in Akwanga, Assistant Corps Commander Ebere Onyegbaduo, said the accident involved a

commercial VW Sharon bus and a private Toyota Sienna bus.

Onyegbaduo said a preliminary investigation showed that the accident occurred when the Sharon bus, coming from Abuja axis, rammed into the Sienna while attempting to overtake on a hilly bend Agwada town.

He said the two vehicles went up in flames, with the occupants trapped inside, adding that all the 17 people were burnt beyond recognition.

He said the occupants of the Sharon bus were taken to the Akwanga General Hospital; while those of the Sienna had been taken to the Dalhatu Araf Specialist Hospital (DASH), in Lafia.

He said, "We received a distress call of a ghastly accident by 7 pm around Agwada town, between Akwanga and Gudi towns.

"We rushed to the scene and found a commercial VW Sharon bus and a private Toyota Sienna bus engulfed in flames with the occupants inside the burning vehicles.

"We called the fire brigade and the fire was contained by 11 pm and we completed the rescue by 2 am," he said.

Mourning in Gashaka

Hundreds of mourners yesterday trooped to the palace of Lamido Gashaka in Serti, the traditional seat of Gashaka chieftom to condole with the monarch, Zubairu Hamman Gabdo, over the death of his brother and his family.

Emirs and chiefs from within and outside Taraba had also arrived at the palace to commiserate with the monarch. Business and other activities in Serti were also suspended as locals thronged the palace to commiserate with the bereaved family. It was learnt that the funeral prayer for the deceased was conducted at the palace of Emir of Lafia in Nasarawa State.

Buhari commiserates with Nguroje

President Muhammadu Buhari has condoled with former Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Babangida Nguroje, over the death of two of his sisters, Zainab and Hajliya Hadiza with her husband and their four kids, in a road accident.

President Buhari, in a statement issued on Sunday by his spokesman, Garba Shehu, said: "I am lost for words to

describe such multiple deaths in a single-car accident in which family members perished.

"I received the news of this tragedy with deep shock and grief, and wish to express my heartfelt sympathy and solidarity with you at this trying and painful moment."

He prayed to Allah to forgive the gentle souls of the deceased persons and comfort those they left behind.

The Bauchi tragedy

2 In Bauchi, no fewer than 20 passengers were burnt beyond recognition in a road crash that occurred yesterday at Tirwun, a suburb of the state capital.

Eyewitness Garba Sabo told Daily Trust that the accident occurred at Mangorori area of Tirwun when a Hummer bus heading to Maiduguri from Jos with 18 passengers collided with a Volkswagen Golf car heading to Bauchi with four passengers on board.

The spokesman of the Bauchi State Police Command, DSP Ahmed Wakil, also confirmed the incident, saying the two vehicles went up in flames with 20 passengers burnt beyond recognition.

Wakil, who did not disclose

the cause of the accident, said the remains of the victims had been deposited of morgue at the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Teaching Hospital (ATBU-TH) in Bauchi.

He said two female passengers survived with varying degrees of injuries and were receiving treatment at ATBU-TH. In a telephone interview, a staff of Borno Express in Jos, who spoke to our correspondent on condition of anonymity, also confirmed the accident.

"I know one of the passengers, who came from Cotonou in Benin Republic on her way to Borno for an assignment.

"She came from Lagos yesterday (Saturday), slept here in Jos and arrived at the motor park this morning. Out of the 18 passengers, 16 died and two females sustained injuries and unfortunately, she is among the dead passengers in the accident.

"I am not the custodian of the passengers manifest but I partook in loading the vehicles which included men, women and children but you can come to Jos office to get information or the passengers involved," he said.