

How 20 Perished In Enugu Tanker Fire



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A tanker fire in Enugu State has killed about 20 people, including three children. The incident occurred on Saturday, just two weeks after a similar accident in Niger State that left approximately 90 people dead, raising concerns over tanker safety and the frequency of such devastating crashes.

The fire broke out around 11 a.m. at Ugwu Onyeama along the Enugu-Onitsha Expressway.

Eyewitnesses said the tanker lost control while descending a hilly section of the road, crashing into vehicles ahead before spilling its contents and igniting a massive explosion.

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Sunday Ugwumba, a bus driver who witnessed the incident, said, “The tanker failed, spilling fuel which caught fire. All the vehicles around it, along with the people inside, were burned.”

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Residents attribute the accident to the poor state of the road. One eyewitness highlighted how the condition of a single lane forces heavy trucks and regular vehicles to share the same space, increasing the risk of accidents.

“We urge the government to repair the road immediately to prevent more tragedies and ensure the safety of road users,” he said.

Christian, another resident, lamented the repeated loss of lives due to the deplorable road.

“This road has claimed many lives. We are calling on the government to take urgent action to fix it,” he said.

The incident has sparked outrage, with stakeholders demanding a thorough investigation into this and previous crashes to identify causes and prevent future disasters.

Over 200 survivors in hospital

Sources told our correspondent yesterday that over 200 injured victims were receiving treatment at Enugu State University Teaching Hospital, Parklane, Enugu.

While some of them with minor burns have been discharged, others with major injuries are still at the hospital.

A relative of the victim, Ebube Ugwu, said her sister and friends with their children were in a Lexus car when the tanker accident occurred, getting trapped in the process.

FRSC confirms 18 deaths

The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) confirmed that 18 people were burnt to death in the incident.

Olusegun Ogungbemide, the FRSC national spokesperson, said on Saturday night, the FRSC team also rescued 13 motorists from the inferno.

“A total of 31 people were involved in the crash. 10 were rescued with different degrees of injury while three were rescued unharmed. Unfortunately, the 18 remaining victims were burnt beyond recognition,” he said.

He added that Governor Peter Mbah of Enugu State, his transport commissioner, and the Commissioner of Police, Kanayo Uzuegbu, took part in the rescue operation.

Others were the FRSC zonal commanding officer in charge of RS9 Enugu, the sector commander Enugu and the state director of the State Security Service.

The FRSC spokesperson attributed the crash to brake failure, adding that 17 vehicles were involved in the incident.

Meanwhile, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has condoled with the government and the people of Enugu State over the fuel tanker explosion, which resulted in the loss of lives on Saturday.

President Tinubu, in a statement by his media aide, also called “for caution and adherence to safety measures among road users, particularly fuel tanker operators.”