

# NEWS

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### 30 die in Lagos-Ibadan road crash

*From Charles Coffie-Gyamfi and  
 Adeyemi Adepetun, Abeokuta*

THE Lagos-Ibadan highway has once again lived up to its billing as Nigeria's gateway to heaven, no thanks to its army of pot-holes and craters.

In a fell swoop, the road on Sunday night claimed no fewer than 30 lives in a ghastly accident involving a fuel tanker, four buses and two cars.

The Ogun State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Joseph Apapa, told journalists yesterday that the death toll could even be higher.

The accident occurred at about 11.00 p.m. near the Conoil fuel station, a few metres from the Sagamu interchange in Ogun State. The highway straddles Lagos, Ogun and Oyo states.

An eyewitness disclosed that the tanker was coming from Lagos. In an attempt to avoid a pothole, the tanker tipped on its side, spilling its fuel content on the road.

According to the source, as soon as the tanker fell, it caught fire and the fire started spreading with a lightening speed.

The fire caught all the six vehicles that were directly behind it, consuming most of their 90 passengers.

A doctor at the Olabisi Onabanjo University Teaching Hospital, Sagamu where the survivors were rushed to, told The Guardian that 10 of the victims who received various degrees of burns were on admission. He said that some of the cases were very serious.

The Police Commissioner told reporters: "The driver of one of the affected buses after the bus caught fire, in desperation, drove into the bus but none of the victims in that bus survived."

The Guardian learnt that the accident involved the aides of the Minister of Power and Steel Development, Alhaji Sarafa Tunji Isola. The aides were said to have seen off the minister who was in Abeokuta at the weekend to the Lagos Airport on his way to Abuja and were returning to Abeokuta when the accident occurred.

Two of the aides who were said to have received injuries were among those being treated.

Only last week, another accident on the same road claimed 17 lives early last year, an accident in which a fuel tanker fell in a similar manner, resulted in burning of about 15 vehicles and the death of several persons.

A source told The Guardian that there was no survivor in a 14-seater bus. All its passengers, including the driver were burnt to ashes.

One of the victims was a pregnant woman who sat in the front of one of the 18-seater buses. She was also burnt to ashes.

A long line of queues of wailing sympathisers formed at the scene yesterday morning, all decrying the poor states of the inter-city highway.

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