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Tuesday, September 23, 2008

**19 feared killed in Benin, Lagos auto crashes***From Alemma-Ozioruva Aliu, (Benin City) and Alex Olise (Lagos)*

**I**N two separate auto crashes in Benin and Lagos, about 19 people lost their lives at the weekend.

In Benin, all the occupants of a 14-seater bus travelling along the Benin-Agbor road near Gonoba Village on Sunday were killed as the bus caught fire and all the passengers were burnt to death.

According to the Edo State Zonal Commander of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), Zakari Ndah, the bus, a Toyota Hiace, marked XD 474 JJJ, was travelling to Onitsha when the accident occurred around 1p.m. It ran into a fuel tanker with registration number XE 383 TRN, which was said to be carrying over 35,000 litres of fuel

"The truck was already gutted with fire and the driver of the bus refused to stop when he was flagged down. He thought it was just smoke and ran into the petroleum tanker, which cause of fire outbreak could not be ascertained. All of them were consumed by the inferno. We were able to rescue two corpses and took them to hospital while 12 were burnt beyond recognition."

The accident disrupted movement on the busy route for several hours on Sunday even as others travelling from Benin to Onitsha were forced to halt their journey.

Also, multiple accidents rocked part of Lagos at the weekend and yesterday, killing a serving army personnel and four civilians.

The military officer was crushed by a trailer on Sunday evening at Alasia area of Oshodi, when he attempted to cross the road.

But the four other victims were killed by another trailer yesterday morning at Cement Bus Stop, Agege area of Lagos State.

The two incidents attracted sympathisers who besieged the scene to ascertain the identities of the victims.

The remains of the army officer and other victims were removed by policemen and taken to the Ikeja General Hospital after alerting military authorities in the state.

The state police spokesman, Mr. Frank Mba, in a recent interview with The Guardian, advised motorists in the state to always drive carefully by obeying traffic rule and regulation.

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