

18 feared killed in C'River auto crash

From Anietie Akpan, Calabar

NO fewer than 18 persons were feared dead on Wednesday in a ghastly motor accident along the Calabar-Itu Federal Highway.

However, Cross River State Police Command put the casualty figure at four.

The accident, according to an eye-witness, involved two trucks and a commercial bus, which collided on a bridge along the dilapidated highway.

Some policemen, who arrived at the scene, were assisted by sympathisers to

• Police confirm four dead

pull out the dead bodies while those injured were taken to Uyo in Akwa Ibom State for treatment.

Following the crash, hundreds of vehicles going to Calabar, Akwa Ibom and other parts of the South-South and South-West, were trapped in a traffic jam.

Many commuters had to trek long distances to board vehicles while those in private cars were trapped till midnight when part of the

road was cleared.

One of the motorists, who ply the road, Mr. Etim Edet, said: "For the past two hours, I have been in this traffic that may likely last till the next day. I learnt two trucks and a bus collided on the small bridge blocking everywhere.

"This is very embarrassing to us. This road has long been bad and it should be reconstructed to have four or six lanes considering the volume of traffic, especially the

heavy trucks that carry chip-pings and other materials from Akamkpa in Cross River to other parts of the country".

The Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Hogan Bassey, who was at the scene of the crash yesterday, confirmed the incident, saying: "On the spot, they were four dead bodies and some were rushed to the hospital and we don't know the final figure yet. Our men have tried their best in clearing the road and the victims".

The Calabar-Itu road is a

dead trap and the Senate leader, Victor Ndoma-Egba (SAN), at a recent press briefing in Calabar, said letters have been written to the federal, Cross River, Akwa Ibom and Abia states' governments on strategies to tackle the bad road.

He expressed the hope that soon, something would be done to it and they would even create an alternative route through the East-West road.

So far, nothing is on ground and on daily basis, the road is claiming lives and property.