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## Metro

## Two die in tanker fire in Rivers

By Ann Godwin, Port  
Harcourt and Odita  
Sunday, Lagos

14 December 2018 | 3:10  
am



Two persons were feared dead yesterday when a tanker loaded with petrol fell and spilled its content after it bumped into a pothole on Eleme Onne road, by East West Road, Port Harcourt in Rivers State.

The tanker exploded immediately it fell, killing the driver and the conductor, who screamed for help but no one came to their rescue due to the raging fire.

The driver was said to be on high speed without knowing that there was a pothole ahead. Consequently, he lost control of the steering, which led to the accident.

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Stray bullet kills tanker driver  
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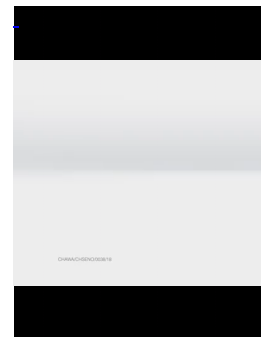
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The Guardian arrived at the scene few minutes after the accident. No other vehicle was affected, as immediately the tanker fell, other motorists both the incoming and outgoing lanes screeched to a halt, reversed and escaped the fire.

It took about an hour for the fire fighters to arrive at the scene. Before then, residents and onlookers braved the odds attempting to put out the fire.

Speaking with The Guardian, Mr. Confidence Brown, who witnessed when the driver was accelerating said, “the tanker was coming from Eleme junction to Refinery but when it got to Winners Junction, just before Akpajo junction, it jumped through the pothole and could not control the steering anymore. So, the truck fell and immediately burst into flames, killing the driver and the conductor who were trapped under it.”

He disclosed that the first eyewitness called the emergency line ‘112’ when the incident happened but lamented that there was no response. Others blamed the failure of the Federal Government to fix the ever-busy Eleme/Onne road, which serves as host to one of the nation’s refineries.



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The accident caused severe gridlock on the highway as motorists could not pass through one axis of the road because the fallen tanker that barricaded the road.

Meanwhile, there was pandemonium yesterday at Trinity area of Apapa, Lagos State when a policeman shot dead a tanker driver.

Trouble started when the policeman allegedly demanded for a toll of N1,000 from the tanker driver, who said he could only afford N500.

It was gathered that the refusal of the driver did not go down well with the policeman who shot him. Colleagues of the deceased attempted to lynch the policeman but he was rescued by his colleagues who fired sporadically to scare away the drivers and conductors who had formed a crowd round the scene.

The driver was shot dead by a policeman attached to the Federal Special Anti-Robbery Squad (FSARS) posted to Ajegunle to tackle traffic robbers in the Mile 2-Apapa axis.

The tanker drivers took to the street protesting the death of their colleague. They barricaded the road into Apapa with their trucks causing heavy gridlock.

Also burnt were used tyres on the road forcing shop owners and other businessmen to close shop.

Street urchins, known as 'Area boys', used the opportunity to rob innocent citizens. Many people got injured in the melee while vehicles were vandalized.

A tanker driver, Danladi Usman, said the extortion was becoming too much on them. "We pay N1,000 to police, N3000 to Navy. We pay to officials of the Lagos State Traffic Management Agency (LASTMA) and to local government officials and above all to the area boys. The extortion is becoming a burden on us. If we don't have any money to pay, they make us pay with our lives. Is it a crime to be a truck driver," he said.

Another driver, Shehu Adamu, said the killing of truck drivers by security operatives was becoming one too many and that they have vowed to put and end to it.



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