

Four killed, scores injured as bus plunged into Taraba river

From **Charles Akpeji** Jalingo

2 **F**OUR people were killed after a passenger bus they were travelling in plunged into a river in Taraba State.

The accident, which occurred on Sunday in Sarti, the administrative headquarters of Gashaka Local Government Area of the state, also left several occupants of the bus injured.

The bus, which belongs to the Christian Reform Church-Nigeria (CRC-N) Adamawa State chapter was conveying the church unity band members from Sarti back to Jalingo and Yola when the incident occurred.

An eyewitness account said the unity band members died when the bus carrying them back from the national Music Concert of CRC-N Unity Band, held in Serti, headquarters of Gashaka Local Government Area of

Taraba State, lost control and fell from a bridge near Serti.

A church member, who confirmed the incident, said "four people died in the accident while several others sustained injuries."

According to the witness, the driver, who was not familiar with the road, lost control of the situation, and plunged both the bus and the passengers into the bridge.

Other sources, who also spoke with *The Guardian*, said the injuries would have been minimised but for the absence of network coverage in the area. "When the accident occurred people were only screaming for help but reaching out to security personnel, who would have come to help in evacuating the victims to nearby medical facilities was impossible because of limited network Service in that particular

area."

They expressed dismay over limited network coverage, and called on all the service providers in the council to extend their network coverage to the nook and crannies of the area.

The Guardian learnt that remains of the victims have been deposited at the morgue in Federal Medical Centre (FMC) Jalingo, while those that sustained injuries were being attended to in the same hospital.

Confirming the incident, Taraba State Chairman of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Jirapye Isaiah Magaji, said the news of the accident came as a rude shock to him and the entire CRC-N members as well as christians in both Taraba and Adamawa states. He consoled with the families of the victims and expressed readiness of the church to accord the deceased befitting burial.