

# Tragedy as trailer crushes 20 pupils to death in Lagos

By **Bertram Nwannekanma and Gbenga Akinfenwa**

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## FRSC rescues 7, denies causing accident

It was a black Tuesday in the Ojodu-Berger area of Lagos State as a trailer rammed into school pupils during afternoon hours and crushed 20 of them to death.

The pupils were reported to be of Omole Primary School and Babs Fafunwa's Secondary School. Among those feared killed were three pupils of the same parents.

In reaction, students of nearby secondary schools blocked the road and pursued the trailer up to Ogba, where the driver was caught up and the trailer, allegedly set ablaze.

Sources said the accident occurred about 2:00 p.m. at the Grammar School Bus Stop when the pupils, who just finished their examination for the day, we're going home.

Residents, especially motorists and traders, who witnessed the accident could not control their emotions, as mangled bodies of the pupils with their bloodstained uniforms littered the bus stop.

According to sources, the truck driver was alleged to have been chased by an official of Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) before killing the students.

Another account said, it was Vehicle Inspection Officers (VIO), that were pursuing the truck driver before he rammed into the pupils.

Angered by the accidents, youths took over the road and blocked the road, resulting in pandemonium.

But an eyewitness, Temitope Ibidun, who arrived at the scene immediately after the accident, said the white truck coming from Berger was allegedly being pursued by policemen and in the process of escaping lost control and ram into the students waiting to board vehicles home.

She said: "From their uniforms, they are students of Ojodu Grammar School and Babs Fafunwa's Secondary School.

At least, I counted about 20 students that have been crushed, with several others injured.

"Seeing their mangled bodies will force tears down the eyes of whoever witnessed the scene, it was a gory sight to behold.

"At the initial stage, before I got to the scene, I saw two students carrying one of their mates drenched in blood, I was still asking myself what would have happened to him when they had teachers in their school before I saw the scene ahead. It was a gory sight to behold."

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Ibidun said the incident caused serious traffic gridlock in and outside Ojodu as the bodies littered the Berger- Ogba road, as traffic flow was grounded to a standstill. “I trekked from the scene to Ogba as there was no vehicular movement. It was when I got to Ogba that we learnt that the fleeing truck was apprehended in front of Excellence hotel.

Meanwhile, sanity has returned to Ogunnusi road, Ojodu as security agencies have fully taken charge of the situation.

The Lagos Police Public Relations Officer, Adekunle Ajisebutu, who confirmed the accident said security agencies are on top of the situation.

“Adequate policemen are on the ground to maintain law and order. The situation is being professionally handled,” he added.

MEANWHILE, the Lagos Sector Commander of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) has denied involvement in the crash that claimed the lives of school children along Ogunnusi Road, Ojodu.

In a statement signed by the Route Commander and Public Education Officer, Olabisi Sonusi, FRSC said: “An articulated truck was said to have lost control at Grammar School Bus stop along Ogunnusi road, which caused the death of an unverified number of students and leaving many injured.

“The men of FRSC were called upon by passersby to help intervene after the crash had happened.

“About seven of the victims were rescued and immediately taken to Lagos State Emergency Centre, Ojota, by FRSC personnel, while another road user helped in carrying about seven also to the same emergency centre.

“The general public should disregard the information being circulated by some unscrupulous elements that FRSC men caused the crash.

“We want to place on record that our men were not in any way involved in the cause of the crash as patrol activities were not ongoing along that axis as at the time of the crash.

“The Sector Commander Corps Commander Olusegun Ogungbemide, however, wishes to commiserate with the families of the deceased, that God will grant them the fortitude to bear the irreplaceable loss. He also prayed that the injured would recuperate fast.

“He, therefore, wishes to state that normalcy has been restored to the axis as security agents are on ground to ensure free flow of movement for motorists.”

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