

# Tanker drivers protest alleged death of colleague, block Abuja-Lokoja highway

By **Guardian Nigeria**

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Irate tanker drivers, yesterday, blocked the Abuja-Lokoja highway in protest against the alleged death of one of their colleagues, who ran into a ditch after refusing to stop at a military checkpoint close to Murtala Mohammed Bridge, Jamata.

Sources claimed that the tanker driver refused to stop when he was flagged down at the military checkpoint and was allegedly chased by the security personnel.

The driver was said to have stopped his vehicle on noticing that he was being chased, attempted to run into the bush, but fell into a ditch and was seriously injured.

He was rushed to hospital for medical attention, but later died. His death was said to have annoyed other tanker drivers, who later blocked the Abuja-Lokoja highway.

Contacted, spokesperson for Kogi State Police Command, Superintendent of Police (SP), William Aya, said he had no information as to whether or not the driver died.

“It’s true that the driver fell into a ditch and was taken to the hospital, but I can’t say if he later died, I will find out and get back to you,” he said.

MEANWHILE, Kogi State governor, Alhaji Yahaya Bello, has ordered the immediate reopening of Abuja-Lokoja-Lagos highway.

Bello gave the order in Lokoja through his Special Adviser on Security Matters, Mr. Omodara Jerry.

The governor expressed sadness over the death of the driver, but condemned the action of the tanker drivers, saying there were better ways of channeling their grievances.

He said the Abuja-Lokoja-Lagos highway is a critical road and its continued blockade was detrimental to businesses and lives of the people.

“The Guards Commander and his men are already on their way to ensure fruitful dialogue with the aggrieved tanker drivers for possible reopening of the highway.

“This blockade has affected businesses of Nigerians and might endanger some people with critical health issues. Imagine if an expectant mother falls into labour in the resultant gridlock.

“Blocking the highway is not the best way to handle issues.

“Where you are aggrieved in one way or the other, you must look at what the provisions of the law say so that you don’t take the law into your hands,” he said.