

National

Scores feared dead, 70 vehicles burnt as patrol tanker explodes in Rivers

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It was a tragic Friday evening for both the commuters and residents of Rivers State, following the fire incident that claimed scores of commuters and razed over 70 vehicles at the Eleme axis of the East-West Road.

The fire, according to eyewitnesses, was caused by a petrol tanker that went up in flames while trying to meander through a deplorable section of the road.

The fire engulfed other vehicles on its trail, as there was no leeway for escape, as many occupants could barely flee, having been trapped.

The fire was difficult to put out by the firefighting crew deployed by the Indorama Patrochemical Company.

Visiting the scene of the incident, The Guardian observed that no fewer than 70 vehicles, both private and commercial vehicles, were burnt beyond repair.

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Also, an unspecified number of people suffered casualties as many were burnt



There was a heavy police presence at the scene to guard against looting and to promote orderliness.

One of the survivors, who gave his name as Precious, narrated his ordeal. He blamed the slow pace of the road, which is undergoing construction, as the reason for the accident.

According to him; “In fact, I was driving, coming from Eleme heading towards Akpajo, approaching the bridge, I saw an abnormal traffic jam, so I decided to join the line.

“But all of a sudden, many people started to run towards us shouting fire. So it was difficult for me to reverse, my car but I tried to and went to somewhere far to park only for us to return and saw that many vehicles were burnt. A lot of people were burnt inside their vehicles even those who were trying to run but gutted by the fire.”

Baridilo, another survivor recounted: “We were around this area when we heard an explosion, only for us to get to this place and saw some vehicles already burnt as a result of a tanker that they carried petroleum products.”

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