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National

Tanker explosion claims 48 lives, 50 cattle in Niger

By **Bala Yahaya (Minna), Rotimi Agboluaje and Moyosore Salami (Ibadan)**

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Scenes of the inferno in Niger and Ibadan

- **One injured, three vehicles burnt in Ibadan explosion**

A Tanker explosion in Niger State yesterday resulted in the loss of 48 lives and approximately 50 cattle. The incident occurred around 12:30 a.m. along the Lapai-Agaie road near Dendo Community in Agaie Local Council.

According to Abdullahi Baba Arah, Director General of the Niger State Emergency Management Agency (NSEMA), the explosion was triggered by a collision between a petrol tanker and a trailer truck carrying travellers and cattle. Two additional vehicles were also caught in the incident.

Rescuer drawn from the state's Rapid Response Team and Local Government Emergency Management Committee spent hours at the scene to recover trapped bodies from the wreckage.

The charred remains of the victim have been given mass burial. Governor Mohammed Umaru Bago expressed his sorrow over the tragic event and assured the public that NSEMA and other relevant agencies are actively involved in rescue efforts and necessary actions. He urged residents to remain calm and emphasised the importance of road safety.

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SIMILARLY, one person was injured when a tanker exploded on the Ibadan-Ife Expressway near the Iyana-Ajia Bridge in the Egbeda area of Ibadan.

The Guardian learnt that the fire engulfed the tanker, a mini-truck, an 18-seater bus, a Micra car, a tricycle and a motorbike. The explosion occurred at about 4:45 p.m. on Saturday, forcing residents and commuters to flee for safety.

An eyewitness, Biodun Ayoola, described how the tanker caught fire while trying to switch lanes. Ayoola said the incident occurred when the tanker attempted to navigate a blocked lane due to ongoing construction at the Iyana-Ajia junction, got stuck and began leaking fuel.

“As people in the vicinity started scooping up the leaking fuel, a secondary fire from a nearby vehicle spread to the tanker, igniting a massive explosion,” he said.

Ayoola added that the resulting blaze quickly engulfed nearby vehicles, forcing motorists and passers-by to evacuate the area swiftly. Although no fatalities were recorded, one male passenger sustained injuries and was rushed to Toun Specialist Hospital on Iwo Road for treatment.

The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) confirmed that 27 people, including 18 males and nine females, were involved in the incident. The Corps spokesperson, Mayowa Odewo, urged caution among tanker drivers and stressed the need to

exercise patience while driving, especially when carrying highly flammable substances.

“This incident is a reminder of the dangers associated with carelessness on the road, particularly for drivers of heavy-duty vehicles. We urge drivers to be more mindful,” he stated.

The General Manager of the State Fire Services, Yemi Akinyinka, noted that preliminary investigations pointed to the actions of those attempting to collect the leaking fuel as a likely factor which escalated the fire. It was learned that efforts to clear the wreckage and restore normal traffic flow were underway by yesterday morning.

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