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Yar'Adua's Convoy In Crash

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Over the weekend, a total 46 people died in multiple road accidents in Osun, Edo, and Nasarawa States, as well as Abuja, not counting the 17 who perished on the Ibadan-Ife Expressway last Thursday.

Aso Rock confirmed the death of a security detail, Suleiman Adebayo, who died in an auto crash on the Abuja Airport Expressway on Sunday.

Adebayo, with other security personnel and State House officials, had been at the airport to receive President

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Umaru Yar'Adua, who arrived from Washington at 9.40 a.m.

A statement issued by Presidential Media Adviser, Olusegun Adeniyi, recounted that the acci-

dent occurred when one of the tyres of the Mercedes Benz car Adebayo drove to convey the security details back to the Villa burst at Lugbe Junction.

Yar'Adua's Chief Personal Physician and other officials in

the convoy stopped to convey the five persons injured to the National Hospital, Abuja. It was there Adebayo was pronounced dead.

The four other victims are receiving treatment at the

hospital, where Health Minister, Adenike Grange, received them.

Yar'Adua has directed officials of the Nigerian Embassy in Saudi Arabia to convey his condolences to the widow and mother of Adebayo who are on pilgrimage in Mecca.

He also ordered the release of a Presidential aircraft to take the remains of Adebayo to his hometown for burial on Sunday

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Minister

Yar'Adua's Convoy In Crash

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afternoon.

In Osun, another set of 15 people lost their lives on Saturday on the spot where 17 people had died in a motor accident on Thursday on the Ibe-Ibadan Expressway.

In the latest accident, four vehicles rammed into the wreckage of those that crashed on Thursday.

They were two trailers, a Peugeot 504 commercial vehicle, and another trailer loaded with cement.

One trailer lost control and hit another loaded with soft drinks that was already involved in an accident.

All the passengers in the commercial vehicle perished. Their corpses have been deposited at the Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital, Ile-Ife.

Osun State Commandant of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), Halidu Halilu Baba, could not be reached to explain why the wreckage was yet to be re-

moved 24 hours after the first accident.

One of the early callers at the scene, Peter Adebayo Babalola (Governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola's Chief of Staff), decried the negligence that led to the new accident.

He urged the FRSC to evacuate the debris as more people would travel on the road during this festive season.

Three members of the Living Faith Church were killed near Benin City when the car in which they were traveling to Lagos rammed into a stationary trailer.

They were among the 10 who died in three separate accidents in Edo State at the weekend.

The toll gate unit Commander of the FRSC in Benin City, Uzor Chukwuma, said the church members were travelling from Warri, Delta State to the Shiloh camp of the church in Ota, Ogun State when the accident occurred at the Okada junction on the

Lagos-Benin Expressway.

Four survivors were taken to the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH).

The two other accidents occurred at kilometre four on the Benin bypass. One involved two trailers, which Chukwuma said violated the one-way regulation.

He narrated that the two trailers were recklessly overtaking each other on the same track when they fell off the road. Two people died.

The third accident involved eight vehicles, including a tanker loaded with diesel. Four persons perished.

Uzor decried the violation of the one-way traffic rule by drivers on the Lagos-Benin Expressway, and appealed to passengers to always call their drivers to order.

He said the FRSC would place emergency numbers on the highways which

commuters could call when they need help during the Christmas period.

In Nasarawa in the North West, no fewer than 20 people died in a car crash in Kadarko on the Lafia-Makurdi Road.

The accident involved an 18-seater bus belonging to Benue Links and a Mercedes Benz car.

Both vehicles ended up being submerged in water at a sharp bend.

Rescuers were able to pull out eight bodies, which the police were yet to identify.

Some of the victims wore *anko* or *ashobi* (uniform dressing), which suggested they were heading for or coming back from a social function.

Their remains could not be deposited at the Dalhattu Araf Specialist Hospital in Lafia as the mortuary was already full to capacity.

Arrangements were being made at the weekend to transfer them to the mortuary at the Federal Medical Centre (FMC), Makurdi.