

Three 'Operation Burst' officers killed in auto crash

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THREE members of 'Operation Burst', the joint security patrol team of the Oyo State government, were reportedly killed and many injured on Thursday in Ibadan, the state capital when their vehicle was involved in an accident with one private bus and a motorcycle.

According to an eyewitness, the Operation Burst vehicle was on top speed on the Mokola-Sango-UI-Ojoo expressway in the morning owing to light traffic occasioned by the weekly environmental sanitation.

At a sharp bend while approaching Sango from UI, the driver of the vehicle was said to have lost control and hit an electric pole in the median, crossing to the other side of the expressway.

In the process, it rammed into another commercial vehicle coming from Sango end of the road,

which was approaching UI, and a motorcyclist.

Three members of the security outfit reportedly died on the spot while others sustained injuries.

However, there were indications at press time that one of the critically injured officers might have died in the hospital.

Confirming the incident, the state Police Command Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Olabisi Ilobanafor, said the accident, which occurred around 9am, claimed "one Police Inspector, Adebola Apata, Lance Corporal Bola, a female, and one private soldier, Onoh.

"Police Corporals Bello Kayode, George Adeyemo and Sergeant Abdullahi Mannir (soldier), as well as the driver of the private vehicle and the cyclist were injured".

The accident victims were rushed to the University College Hospital (UCH) where they were received by the Chief Medical Director (CMD), Temitope Alonge.

The incident caused a traffic gridlock on the ever-busy road and it took the combined efforts of the police and other security agencies to make the road passable for motorists.

Meanwhile, Special Adviser to the Governor on Media, Festus Adedayo said Gov Abiola Ajimobi, immediately abandoned all official engagements and rushed to UCH to ascertain the level of casualty in the accident.

Aside the people who died, four others, including two civilians, one Army officer and one policeman, had been taken to the University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan where they are receiving treatment. One of them was said to be in critical condition.

A visibly shaken Ajimobi, after emerging from the Emergency Ward of the hospital, said that government would foot their medical bills.

The governor, who was ac-

companied by the General Officer Commanding, 2 Mechanised Division, Nigerian Army, Ibadan, Major General M. D. Abubakar, the state Director of State Security Service (SSS), Charles Ugwu; Commissioner for Health, Dr. Muyiwa Gbadegesin; Chief of Staff, Adeolu Akande, and other top government officials, specifically asked the hospital management what their challenges were, promising that the government was willing to offer them some form of assistance.

At the emergency ward of the hospital, the governor specifically promised that government would help the hospital procure some vital signs monitors which the hospital staff said were in short supply.

"Even though UCH is a federal health institution, because it is in Oyo State and it is for the benefit of the people of the state, we will assist you in the procurement of some of the equipment," he said.