

# Death Toll Rises To 10 In Anambra Petrol Tanker Fire

By **Our Correspondents** - February 11, 2019



*Haruna Mohammed*

## **Raymond Ozoji and Gloria Anaeze**

**Awka / Onitsha** – The death toll from the petrol tanker explosion in Amawbia axis in Awka, the Anambra State capital on Sunday rose to 10.

The inferno, which engulfed many vehicles and shops in the area about 8:30p.m on Saturday led to the destruction of properties worth millions of naira.

Police Public Relations Officer in Anambra State, SP Haruna Mohammed, who broke the news to newsmen in a police/media WhatsApp group chat, said a fuel tanker, registration number yet unknown, loaded with premium motor spirit (petrol), while negotiating the Amawbia roundabout in Awka, lost control and fell sideways.

As a result, the tanker was engulfed by fire which affected many vehicles and shops in the area, thereby destroying properties worth millions of naira.

He said police patrol teams and other sister agencies mobilised to the scene, cordoned off the area to prevent looters from taking advantage of the situation to loot, and also contacted the fire service department in the state.

According to him, the situation was brought under control while casualties were rushed to Spring Hospital, Amawbia, for medical attention.

The PPRO, however, noted that a number of casualties could not be ascertained at the moment as rescue operation was still ongoing.

Mohammed maintained that the case was under investigation and that effort was being intensified to get the truck driver arrested.

The police said out of the seven corpses confirmed dead, three had been deposited at the Amaku General Hospital morgue, two at the Regina Caeli Hospital, and another two at the Piston Hospital morgue for post-mortem examination.

Mohammed said the only surviving victim was referred to the University Teaching Hospital, Nnewi, and was admitted at the intensive care unit of the hospital.

According to an eye-witness, Ilu Ali, a vegetable dealer in Awka, six of the dead victims were known to him.

"Six persons who died as a result of the fire are northerners, and I know all of them, we were together before the fire started yesterday night.

"Those killed were Sabo Jigawa, Hamza Jarowro, Adamu Mohammed aka Janari, Dansoho, Malam Malam, and Jinjiri (from Garzawa, Kano)," he said.

Ali said that apart from the dead, four other victims who sustained injuries were at Amaku Teaching Hospital, Awka, and a private hospital, Felly, in Amawbia area.

He said the victims were affected because the petrol from the tanker flowed through the water channel to a spot where they were roasting suya meat.

### **APGA Laments Petrol Tanker Disaster**

Victor Oye, the National Chairman, All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), has described the petrol tanker fire incident as a huge disaster.

Oye said this on Sunday when he visited the scene of the accident in Amawbia, for an on-the-spot assessment.

He said: "It is a disaster. Lives were lost and property worth millions of naira was also lost.

"In fact, it is sheer catastrophe. Over 40 shops were burnt in this accident with the wares inside, and over nine lives have been lost, according to the report we received.

"Some of the deceased are our brothers. From what I gathered, the accident was caused by human negligence and factors on the part of the tanker driver and on the part of people who park their cars around this place at that time.

"I learnt that the driver was struggling to avoid those vehicles and the roundabout which made the tanker to fall and burst into fire.

"It happened in my community. It's not just a tragedy for me but for all of us, the entire Anambra populace, the governor was also affected."

Oye said the Anambra government controlled by his party would come to the aid of the affected persons to reduce their sufferings.

He warned that such recklessness on the part of drivers would no longer be condoned.

"The pro-activeness of the governor was what saved the Governor's Lodge; if a water tanker was not stationed there the entire Governor's Lodge would have been gutted," he said.

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