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22 feared dead in road crash

24/12/2008

From Okungbowa Aiwerie Asaba and Osagie Otabor Benin

No fewer than 22 persons were feared dead in a multiple road crash in Agbor, Ika South Local Government Area of Delta State yesterday.

The accident involved a Lagos-bound luxury bus, two oil tankers, four motorcycles and four saloon cars.

As at 12.00pm, Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) officials battled to evacuate the charred remains of human flesh strewn all over Uromi junction on the Benin-Asaba expressway.

Many victims, including pregnant women, were burnt beyond recognition, leaving several others seriously injured.

The accident, which occurred around 10.00a.m., may have been caused by reckless driving.

An eyewitness said: "The luxury bus caused the accident. It was probably rushing back to Lagos from Onitsha to pick passengers, unknowing to the driver that a fuel tanker was negotiating a U-turn at Uromi junction in Agbor. Before he knew it, he could no longer stop the bus and lost control.

"On hitting the tanker, fuel started gushing out and there was a loud explosion."

He said most of those who died were travellers and passengers waiting for vehicles to travel for the Yuletide.

The South-South Zonal Co-ordinator of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), Mr. Mbi Zakari, who could not confirm the casualties figure, said the death toll was heavy.

This, he attributed to the fact that the luxury bus was filled to capacity.

He said only six bodies were recovered from the scene.

"I cannot say the exact casualty figure but judging from the fact that the luxury bus was filled to capacity and the motorcyclists who were crushed to death. Add that to the other twelve bodies lying around," Zakari said.

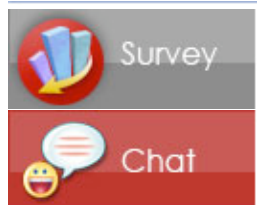
The Commissioner of Police, Mr. Jacob Oshimogho, said he was in a meeting.

The survivors are being treated at to the General Hospital, Agbor and other neighbouring hospitals.

Some unrecognised bodies have been deposited at the mortuary.

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