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Day Ore town lost 42 pupils to accident

 By [Damisi Ojo](#) | Published Yesterday | [News](#) | Rating: ★★★★★

They were going on an excursion to the famous Idanre Hills, but 42 pupils of Ariscent Group of Schools, Ore, Ondo State, their school's proprietor, a teacher and the bus driver conveying them died before they reached the hills, DAMISI OJO reports.



The late Fatimo

Many families in Ore in Ore Odigbo Local Government of Ondo State, will not forget last Wednesday (March 17) in a long time. It was the day the small town lost 42 innocent school children, their school's proprietor, the bus driver and a teacher to an accident. It was a day the town saw human blood flowing like a stream, akin to the infamous Battle of Ore experienced during the Civil War. It was a day whole town shed torrents of tears like it never did before and recessed into the bowels of mourning for the souls of those it had hoped would contribute to its development and greatness in the future.

The school, Ariscent Group of Schools, had assembled the pupils in the company of the proprietor, one of the teachers, and the driver to go on an excursion of the famous Idanre Hills, not far away. But the journey was ill-fated.

As the Mazda bus, with registration number (Ondo) XC 536 REE, took off from the school premises a little after 8am, with the children singing and laughing, no one had an inkling that death lurked on the expressway.

The joy of experiencing, first-hand, the great hills that have only lived in their imagination for some time, apparently beclouded their sense of foreboding about the danger that lay ahead. No one seemed to care about the condition of the vehicle, the bad road, and the excess passengers the bus was conveying. Ironically, these were among the factors that led to the ill-fated excursion.

By 8.30am, the bus was confronted by a trailer coming from the opposite direction. All the attempts the driver made to steer it to safety were unsuccessful. The heavy vehicle crashed into the bus, killing most of the occupants instantly.

The soul of the town was shut down when the sad news spread. Families of the affected children were inconsolable. They gnashed their teeth, clenched their fists, rolled on the ground, and cried their hearts out, to show the pains in their hearts.

The Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), Ore Unit Commander, Mr Micheal Arinze-Agu, said the Mazda bus collided with a trailer tanker.

He explained that the collision with the trailer, with registration number (Katsina) XD 919 KTN, happened as a result of overloading, adding that the vehicle, "meant for 18 passengers, conveyed 42 pupils, the proprietor, a teacher and the bus driver, totaling 45."

A woman identified as "Mama Iyabo" lost three children to the accident, while another woman, who is now in comma at Ore General Hospital, due to shock, lost her only child to the accident.

Spokesman for the Ondo State Police Command, Mr Aremu Adeniran, confirmed the incident, saying, however, that only 28 pupils died.

Those who sustained serious injury were taken to Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital in Ile-Ife, Osun State, while the remains of the pupils were deposited at Ore General Hospital's morgue.

The government expressed shock about the incident and consoled with the families of the dead pupils. It also described the incident as unfortunate.

Commissioner for Information, Mr Ranti Akerele, said the government was disturbed by the news of the accident, saying the death of the children was a great loss to the state.

Akerele noted that the school was not approved by the government, adding that the proprietor did not get approval from the Ministry of Education, as required, before embarking on the excursion.

He said: "It is the duty of any public or private school in the state to notify the Ministry of Education before embarking on an excursion. This will enable the government to provide adequate security for the pupils and give necessary logistics that will make the excursion a success. We are touched by the sad news. We don't handle children's issue with levity. This is why we are always proactive on matters that affect them."

He appealed to the Federal Government to dualise the Ondo/Ore road to reduce accidents there. He said the road has claimed no fewer than 200 lives between 2009 and March this year.

Mrs. Ajoke Oloyode, who lost a child to the accident, told *The Nation* that poor facilities at Ore General Hospital caused the high death toll. She said the death toll increased from 10 to 42 because of lack of equipment and shortage of staff at the hospital.

According to her, Fatimo, her daughter, died after she had been recued from the bus wreck, noting that she would not have died if she and some others had received adequate treatment at the hospital when they were taken there shortly after the accident.

She said: "I watched Fatimo languishing in pains without good medical attention at the general hospital. The poor medical attention received by the survivors in the road mishap increased the death toll from 10 to 42. Many pupils died when their parents took them from the general hospital to private clinics."

She said the condition of the victims had deteriorated before they were moved to the various private hospitals in the town for better medical treatment.

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According to her, no fewer than 30 pupils died as a result of poor medical attention at the hospital.

Mrs Oloyede said: "The general hospital at Ore is a glorified health centre without basic equipment. For over three hours, I watched my daughter in pains, dying slowly. It is not funny that only one doctor, Kazeem, was on hand to attend to the victims. So, tell me, what one single medical doctor can do in the midst of 30 victims languishing in pains."

She also complained about the shoddy treatment the medical personnel exhibited when the pupils were in critical conditions, saying: "The attitude of the workers in the general hospital was nothing to write home about. They were dragging their feet before they could attend to the victims, despite the complaints by some of us. They were just looking as if nothing had happened."

Meanwhile, the remains of the school proprietor, Mr. Tairu Ariyo, were buried at his home town, Iree, Osun State, at the weekend. He was buried according to Islamic injunctions.

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