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39 perish, 60 injured in Niger auto crash

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26/02/2011 01:43:00

Thirty-nine people yesterday lost their lives in an auto accident, while 66 others sustained injuries of various degrees along the Minna-Suleja road in **Niger** State.

The victims, who were mostly in their teens, met their untimely death when the truck conveying them from Kastina State to Minna lost its brakes.

The impact forced the driver to manoeuvre into the undulating bush, killing passengers and livestock.

An eye witness said that on sensing the brake failure, the driver of the vehicle, who was feared dead, had directed his conductor to put a wedge between the wheels to stop the vehicle from rolling down the slope.

In an attempt to salvage the lives of his passengers, which was put at about 200, the embattled driver resorted into shouting to alert other road users of his predicament and to call for assistance to bring the truck to a stop.

He, however, lost control and the vehicle swerved into the bush, toppling over with everyone in it.

The vehicle which, according to reports, had not less than 200 passengers was, said to have taken off from Katsina State heading for Suleja in **Niger** State before tragedy struck.

Confirming the accident, **Niger** State Commander of the Federal Road Safety Commission, Tuma Dalok, said that **39** young men lost their lives in the accident.

Moved by the enormity of the accident, the Emir of Suleja, Mallam Awwal Ibrahim, directed that the remains of the dead be buried immediately to avoid a possible pandemic.

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