

Family of four dies in road crash

FOUR members of the Abdulkadir Wambai family of Lafia Municipal Local Government Area of Nasarawa State have died in a road accident.

The victims are Mr Ahmad Abdulkadir Wambai, his wife Khadijat and two sons, Usman and Isma'il. They were on their way to Lafia when the vehicle in which they were travelling collided with a Bedford lorry.

The late Usman and the late Khadijat were 200-Level students of the Nasarawa State University in Keffi (NSUK). They were in high spirits when they wrote their final paper **last Monday**. They were eager to go back home and spend the semester break with other members of the family.

On the day they were to travel, the late Khadijat got a call from her husband, who informed her of his coming to Keffi with his daughter, who just got admitted into a pre-degree programme at the university. The husband, it was gathered, urged the late Khadijat and the late Usman to delay their trip and promised to take them back to Lafia in his car for their holiday.

On their way to Lafia, their car broke down on the Akwanga-Lafia highway. After efforts to repair the vehicle failed, the family parked it at a police station on the expressway and joined a commercial bus.

A few minutes into the journey, the bus had a head-on collision with the lorry coming from the opposite direction. The bus summersaulted severally before bursting into flames. **All the 13 passengers on board were burnt to death.**

CAMPUSLIFE gathered that a member of the family, Musa Abdulkadir Wambai, broke the sad news to other family members after he was informed by sympathisers on the scene. Musa, it was learnt, immediately called another member of the family, Mr Ahmad Sulaiman Wambai, who is a popular politician in Lafia.

CAMPUSLIFE learnt that the deceased were identified through their identity cards found on the scene. "The sympathisers, who rushed to the scene, saw our family name on the victims' identity cards. One of them called me to confirm if I am related to the accident victims. I put a call through to our elder brother, who informed me that somebody had called him too," Musa explained.

He added: "We arrived on the scene at about 12 midnight and met the vehicles still burning with Ahmad's half body by the side of the burning vehicles. The villagers told us that when the accident happened, Ahmad made efforts to jump out of the vehicle but his legs were trapped in the bus."

An eyewitness, who did not say his name, said: "We tried to rescue him from the raging flame but his legs were trapped in the vehicle; he shouted repeatedly: 'La'ila ha illallahu Muhammadu rasulullahi, sallallahu alaihin wa'salam', which means 'there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah'".

The witness said the late Ahmad continued to recite the Quranic expression until he died.

Musa told our correspondent that the victims were given mass burial the following day because none of them could be identified.

The late Usman reportedly phoned a friend when his late father's car developed fault on the expressway.

Muhammad Usman, a close friend and course mate of the late Usman, said he received the news of his friend's death with shock.

He said: "We were very close. I could have been on the bus with him because he wanted me to join his family in the car. Later I called him to say I could not travel because of other engagements. As they were moving, Usman still kept in touch. In short, he even called and informed me that their car had a problem and that they were boarding another bus to complete the journey. I was shocked to be informed that my friend is no more. I cannot imagine how my life would be without him. He was one person I knew, who could not hurt anybody. He was an upright and complete gentleman."

The late Khadijat's course mate, who did not want her name in print, said the class would miss her because she was a friend to all. "She was down-to-earth and never fought with anybody. Even though she was elderly, she played with everyone without discriminating," she said.

The late Usman was a student of Geography Education; the late Khadijat was studying Islamic Religious Studies.

Officials of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) told CAMPUSLIFE that the accident occurred when the truck veered off its lane and moved to the other side of the expressway.