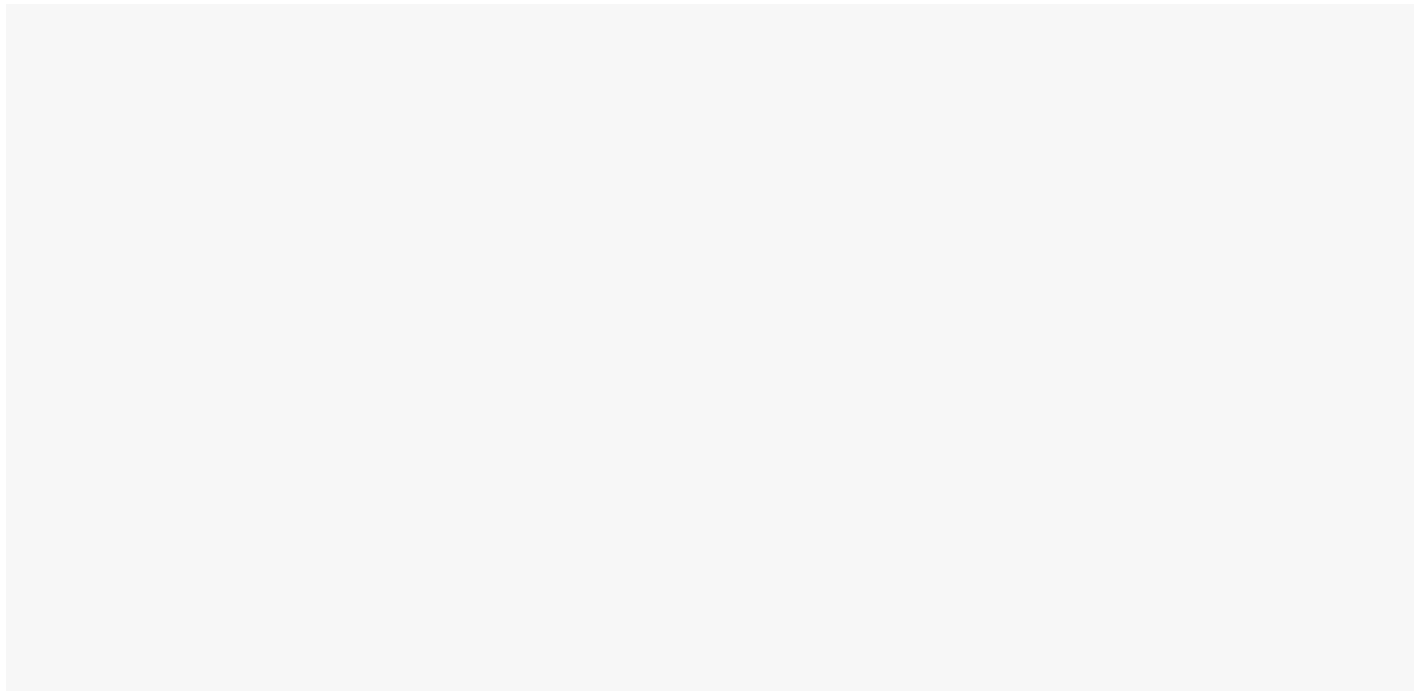


How AAUA students died in road crash

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The death of some students of the Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko (AAUA), Ondo State in an accident that occurred near the gate of the institution has thrown the entire university and student community into mourning. Students have called on the state government to dualise the Akungba Road, report [SAMUEL AGBELUSI](#) and [PETER EMMANUEL](#) (AAUA).

When the duo of Samuel Adesomoju and Oluwaseun Ojinni gained admission to further their education at Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko (AAUA), little did they know what fate had in store for them.

Adesomoju was a final year student of Law and former Students Union President; Ojinni was also a final year student but of Business Administration and first female President of the National Association of Business Administration and Management Students. Also, Pope Kelvin, a graduate of Business Administration of the AAUA, had dreamt of a glorious future after graduation.

However, it was a black Saturday on January 22, as they lost their lives in tragic circumstances. A trailer loaded with cement belonging to Dangote Limited coming from Ikare axis rammed into shops beside the school's main gate as a result of brake failure and crushed many people to death while leaving others injured.

In a twist of fate, earlier on Saturday morning, the Students Union Executives had organised a programme tagged: "Akungba Prayer Walk," to pray against such disaster as they prepared to resume. Sadly, the fatal accident occurred some hours later.

One of the victims, Adesomoju, was buried on Monday amid tears and wailing from students of the institution.

School management reacts

The management of the school in separate statements by its Acting Registrar Mr. Opeoluwa Akinfemiwa, announced the postponement of examinations and indefinite closure of the school following protests from youths in the community. It equally promised to provide solutions to incessant accidents on Akungba Road.

VC wants articulated vehicles barred on Akungba/Ikare road

The Acting Vice Chancellor of AAUA, Prof. Olugbenga Ige, during a visit to the scene of the accident, called for the banning of heavy-duty trucks from the route.

Ige, who condoled with the families of the victims, described the accident as a tragedy on the part of host community, the management of the university and the students at large.

He said colleagues of the deceased had been placated not to take law into their own hands.

“Sadly, it is a tragedy to the community and all Nigerian students. It is painful some of our students were involved and sadly they lost their lives for coming to school to learn and to get themselves educated.

“The last one that happened, we had to constitute a committee whose recommendations we have implemented.

“The committee recommended that roadside trading should be banned and the community market should be relocated and it was complied with.”

Proffering a lasting solution to the incessant trailer accidents, the VC said the hilly route of the community, near the university, should be levelled.

Students’ Union seeks end to accidents

President, AUA Students’ Union, Olwasegun Obagunwa, in a statement said it met with stakeholders and a barricade foundation had been erected to stop heavy duty trucks plying the road.

The statement reads in part: “With great distress, we show our sincere condolences to the deceased and the entire student populace.

“However, the best of this is to ensure our great icons do not just pass away without ensuring lasting solution to the recurrence of such within the student community.

“The Students’ Union has met with all necessary stakeholders and a barricade foundation has been erected today to put a total stop to heavy duty trucks plying our road.

“The union has also issued a 24-hour ultimatum to the Ondo State Government to find a permanent solution to the issue of accidents in Akungba community.

“It is working vigorously to ensure that the lives of everyone is safe as we can never afford to lose anyone to accident whatsoever anymore.

“We make bold as to reiterate that the Student’s Union wouldn’t tolerate any attempt to infringe on the welfare of students from any quarter. We shall always do everything in our capacity to put smiles on your face

and uphold the Students' Union constitution.”

JCC, students, others react

The President, National Association of Nigerian Students(NANS) Joint Campus Committee (JCC) Ondo axis, Comrade Akinteye Babatunde, wants trucks belonging to Dangote Company banned from Ondo roads until the organisation issues a statement and reveal the identity of the driver.

” At JCC Ondo, we are indeed very sad. We are calling on the federal and state government to dualise the Akungba Road. We also don't want to see any truck belonging to Dangote Group pass through Ondo State anymore until the company issues a statement and produce the driver. Therefore, we have informed all SUG presidents in the state to make sure any Dangote truck that passes through their school is stopped,” he said.

Emmanuel Aderogba, a 300-Level student, lamented that heavy-duty trucks belonging to Dangote Group has been causing accidents in Akungba-Akoko for some time.



•Onlookers at the scene of the accident

He said: “About seven months ago, a trailer belonging to Dangote Group was involved in an accident. After the accident in the town market (Ibaka market), the government relocated the market to another location for safety. Sadly, the failure of the driver to detect that the brake was faulty before driving, has resulted in the death of promising students and other residents.

“The narrow Akungba-Akoko Road is not good enough to be considered as interstate road. Therefore, the state government has work to do to avoid fatal accidents like this. The road should be expanded to two lanes.”

Ayobami Grovvy, a student of Law, who spoke at the scene of the accident, said: “The government needs to really do something about the road, as there are not enough speed-breakers to curb the speed of vehicles. I

feel really bad for the victims who lost their lives in the process of getting educated. It is just too sad hearing about accidents almost every time we resume as this has already created fear in the mind of the students.”

Alo Favour, a 400-Level Guidance and Counselling student, said: “It is sad that accidents occur frequently in a student area like this. I can’t just imagine that some lives were lost just because they were preparing for their forthcoming examinations, it is just too painful.”

Emmanuel Adesida, a student at the Business Administration Department, said: “I actually lost two of my dear friends in this accident after seeing them a couple of hours ago. It is quite painful that I won’t see them again. And we are all preparing for graduation. So sad!”

Another student, Tunde Akinyemi, said: “This accident really shattered the hopes of many promising young Nigerians who wanted to get quality education and make their parents proud. The university community is in a mournful mood right now as we look forward to favourable response from the state and Federal Government to do something about this road.”

A lecturer, who preferred anonymity, said : “It is with a heavy heart I speak with you as I hope few people should be able to survive it. My heart goes out to all students of the institution.

“A similar accident of such happened just last December, involving two trucks which later got burnt and spread to other parts of the school community.”

Mr. Akin Ogunlade, an eyewitness, noted that nobody had a premonition of the tragedy, adding that it would be hard for victims to survive .”What happened I can’t really explain because I was talking about business with my friend when all of a sudden a vehicle rammed into a busy mini market where students do get reading materials. It is very uncertain that no one will survive this accident.”

Mrs. Favour Ogunlesi, a trader said: “I lost a dear friend and her son to this accident. They normally hawk their goods just right at the front of the affected shops, I was lucky enough not to get involved as I was just coming from Ikare, having planned to stop over and inform her about some things.”

Dangote Group to sanction erring drivers

In a letter by its Group Managing Director, Michel Puchercos, addressed to the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Olugbenga Ige, the company commiserated with the entire university community, adding that it was ready to sanction erring drivers who cause avoidable accidents and death of innocent citizens through reckless driving.

” Already, strict internal control measures are in place across the Cement Group operations to check and sanction all erring drivers or third party officials who through their careless actions cause avoidable accidents or loss of innocent lives,” the company said.



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