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Fatal Motor Accident Kills 19, Injures Three in Imo

... As Two Die, 70 Injured in Sapele

No fewer than 19 persons were feared dead and three others injured, Friday, in a ghastly motor accident that occurred at Atta, Ikeduru, along the Owerri/Okigwe Road, even as the people of Sapele woke up on Saturday morning with the news of multiple accidents in the ever busy Sapele / Warri road leaving two dead and over 70 others with different degree of injuries lying in hospitals.

In a Road Traffic Condition (RTC) report released in Owerri, Saturday and made available to Niger Delta STANDARD by the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), Imo State Command, the ghastly auto crash involved a white Hyundai Bus marked 'Abia City Transport' with Reg. No. XA769RRT and a loaded white Bullion Van with Reg. No. CH84DGB.

In the report, sector commander of FRSC in the state, Mr Angus Obum Ibezim (CC) disclosed that the bus carrying 20commuters on its way to Okigwe had a head-on collision with the Bullion Van heading to Owerri about 03:15pm that fateful Friday. According to him, 17 persons died on the spot, while five others severely injured in the road mishap were immediately rushed to the Federal Medical Centre (FMC), Owerri, for medical attention.

It was however gleaned that two others later died before getting to the hospital leaving only three survivors out of the 22 victims of the motor accident. The unfortunate accident, Ibezim said, was caused by over-speeding and dangerous overtaking by the Bullion Van and expressed worry that drivers still exceed normal speed limits on the Owerri/Okigwe Road describing the road as very narrow and characterized by blind corners.

He hinted that the dead had since been deposited at the morgue of FMC, Owerri and lamented the avoidable loss of lives occasioned by reckless driving and urged drivers to apply greater caution while on the roads in the state saying they are in deplorable state. He advised motorists to join hands with the commission to reduce accidents on the roads by ensuring reduction in speed at all times and eschew dangerous overtaking especially at bends.

Meanwhile, the multiple accidents in the ever-busy Sapele / Warri road was said to have occurred when a Mercedes 911 bus with about 60 passengers coming from Benin vied off the road due to diesel that was poured on the road by a petrol tanker some time ago, and as a result of a downpour that morning, making the road slippery.

The bus driver who was travelling on a top speed lost control, and crashed into a nearby bush resulting to other accident, as other vehicle trying to dodge the 911 bus also crashed into the bush, but were however lucky that they did not crash into a nearby stream. But a mild drama played itself out when some policemen who came to the scene of the accident, instead of helping out the victims were trying to extort money from some of the victims whose car was also involved in the accident.

The men, which our reporter later discovered to be some of the repentant militant who were going to Warri on peace meeting, engaged the policemen on a heated argument that almost resulted in a fist cuff, but for the timely intervention of men of the JTF which the militant contacted that brought what could have being another ugly incident to normalcy.

When NDS visited the General Hospital Sapele where some of the accident victims were taken to, one of the survival who gave her name as Mrs. Chukwu said "that they went from Port Harcourt to Benin for a burial and they were on their way from Benin, but it was raining and a such the driver, who was not aware of the fuel that was emptied on the road; ran into it and lost control, it was God that intervened and spared our lives as the bus tumbled before it stopped", she said. Most of the victims were still in a state of shock to speak, as at the time NDS visited the Sapele General hospital.

Athan Agbakwuru, Imo and Onitsha Shedrack, Sapele

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