

METRO

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11 die, 14 family members missing in auto crashes



Scene of an accident

Charles Onyekwere and Blessing Njoku

Eleven people have reportedly lost their lives in auto accident which occurred in Enugu and Kaduna states.

The Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) yesterday confirmed that three members of a family died while 14 others were missing when a bus conveying 18 people plunged into River Rijana on Kaduna-Abuja Road.

But in Enugu, eight people lost their lives while many others were injured in an accident on the Enugu-Port Harcourt Ex-

pressway.

The Kaduna State sector's Head of Operations, Mr. Salisus Galadunci, said the 18 persons, who were from one family, were returning to Lokoja from Kano when the accident occurred about 11 pm on Tuesday.

Galadunci said three bodies were recovered from the river while only one person survived the accident.

He said: "An 18-seater bus travelling to Lokoja from Kano plunged into River Rijana with about 18 persons, all related, returning from Sallah break.

"The incident was reported by the only survivor, a woman who managed to report to an

FRSC ambulance stationed at Doka unit on Kaduna-Abuja Expressway, about 7a.m. today (yesterday).

"Rescuers from FRSC Doka, Katari and Kakau were immediately dispatched with ambulances, and with support of local divers to search for survivors.

"Eventually, only three bodies were recovered, while the remaining persons could not be found, including the survivor's daughter."

Galadunci added that the survivor explained that the accident happened in a flash, and attributed it to over speeding and fatigue.

According to him, the recovered bodies have been buried by the river side by villagers, while efforts have been intensified to rescue the 14 missing persons.

He said: "Among the FRSC rescue team were the Zone 1 Commander, Bulus Darwang, Kaduna State Sector Commander, Francis Udoma and Zone 1 Head of Operations, Yomi Asaniyan."

The Enugu accident occurred last Friday about 7:15p.m., near University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Ituku Ozalla, Enugu.

The vehicle with registration number KTD 58 LG (Akwa Ibom State) was conveying people believed to be coming from a pilgrimage centre at Ezeagu in Enugu State to Abia, Abia State.

The Enugu State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Ebere Amaraizu, said in a statement that the driver, Kenneth Nwigwe, a native of Enugu-Ukwu, Anambra State, but residing at Uratta, Abia State, lost control of the vehicle before it skidded into the bush and tumbled.

According to the PPRO, those injured are now receiving treatment at the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Ituku Ozalla.

He added that bodies of the eight yet-to-be identified victims were deposited at the hospital's mortuary.

City Briefs