

Primaries: 30 killed during PDP run-off in Kaduna

Segun Olatunji, Kaduna

NO fewer than 30 people, including some delegates were feared killed on Tuesday in a multiple auto accident at the entrance to the Kaduna International Trade Fair Complex.

The complex was the venue of the scheduled run-off primaries election between the two leading governorship aspirants on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party in the state, Alhaji Namadi Sambo and Senator Isaiah Balat.

The tragedy occurred when the driver of a trailer marked Yobe XB 487 PKM that was loaded with tyres and textile materials suddenly lost control and crushed many of the vehicles already parked by the sidewalk by some of the delegates who had queued up for accreditation.

The trailer had also in the process, killed unspecified number of persons on the spot.

Some of the crushed vehicles, including a fully loaded bus heading for Kano immediately caught fire, roasting alive many of the victims while others escaped death with various degrees of burns.

Apart from the *Leyland Daf* 2800 trailer, a *Toyota Hiace* bus, two *Peugeot* 504 station wagon cars, two *V-Boot*

Mercedes Benz cars, a *Toyota Corolla* car, a *Golf* car and a *Mitsubishi Lancer* car, four motorcycles and three wheelbarrows used in hawking fruits were all caught in the road carnage. They were all burnt.

Many of the victims were taken to the *Army 44 Reference Hospital* and the *Barau Dikko Specialist Hospital*, Kaduna, for treatment by men of the *Federal Road Safety Commission*.

Besides, the remains of those who died in the accident were deposited at the mortuary.

A reliable source, however, told our correspondent that the driver of the trailer was trying to avoid a police armoured vehicle, which suddenly tried to reverse from the entrance of the complex to the Kaduna-Zaria Expressway when it lost control. The police armoured vehicle was one of the two deployed to the venue of the run-off elections.

Further investigations by our correspondent revealed that the police armoured vehicle blocked a portion of the busy road, leaving only one lane for the vehicles plying the road. The accident, however, claimed the lives of eight women and six children in the *Toyota* bus, one okada rider, four fruit hawkers who were peddling their wares

by the roadside, and one yoghurt seller along the road, among several others. They were all burnt beyond recognition.

An eyewitness, Mr. Salihu Haruna, also told our correspondent that the trailer had raced down the sloppy road leading to the junction to the venue of the PDP run-off election when its brake failed and it rammed into the already parked vehicles and the crowd.

The eyewitness added that the trailer dragged the vehicles and the persons trapped in them over 50 metres to the junction of the complex where it eventually stopped.

He said, "The mobile police blocked the road at the junction of the (trade fair) complex and this led to a hold up, the trailer started blaring its horn from afar but there was no way for it to pass, as it could not stop, it ran into the station wagon marked KD 016 A03) which immediately caught fire. It also ran into a *Toyota Hiace* bus which was carrying people to Zaria for a function and the bus too caught fire killing all the passengers inside except one survivor (who had collar bone fracture).

"Along the way it ran into another station wagon (Kaduna marked AG 623 ZAR) which was also gutted by fire while five other cars were also affected.

The hawkers and fruit sellers who were standing by the sidewalk were not spared as they were mostly affected with only some of them surviving the accident. Those who were rescued had been taken to the hospital for treatment."

Experts declare Kano, Katsina, Jigawa as high-risk polio areas

Ibanga Isine, Abuja

THE Expert Review Committee on Polio Eradication in Nigeria has named Kano, Katsina and Jigawa states as being very high-risk areas, recording 60 per cent polio cases in the country.

As at December 1, a total of 1018 cases of poliomyelitis due to wild poliovirus were reported from 18 states of the country, compared with 698 cases in 21 states at the same time in 2005.

The virus is also said to be

Fresh primaries

hold at plateau today