

# Six die at police check-point in Delta

**Sola Adebayo, Warri**

## • Protesters burn police station

**T**RAGEDY struck in Delta State on Thursday as six persons were crushed to death at a police check point in Ebrumede community, Uvwie Local Government Area of the state.

The deceased, all women, were conveying palm oil to a market in Effurun, the headquarters of Uvwie LGA, before they were crushed, to death by an oil trailer at the road block mounted by policemen attached to Ebrumede Police Station.

It was learnt that the driver conveying the deceased on the ill-fated trip was engaging the policemen in a hot argument over a bribe demand before the trailer rammed into the bus.

Consequently, the oil tanker with registration number XA 399 GNA smashed the bus with registration number AA 49 FST and killed all its occupants. The policemen fled the scene as the women groaned under the heavy impact of the accident.

It took officials of the Federal

Road Safety Commission and sympathisers over two hours to secure a pay loader to remove the oil tanker, which rested on the bus. Sympathisers cried uncontrollably as the mutilated remains of the deceased were eventually recovered and taken to the morgue of a government-owned hospital in Effurun.

However, the driver of the bus, his lieutenant and another woman, who had seized the opportunity to ease herself in company with her baby, survived the tragic event.

Blood, palm oil and the wreckage of the bus littered the scene as the rescue operation led to the closure of a portion of the East/West Road (Warri/Port Harcourt highway) by the FRSC.

But the whereabouts of the driver of the oil tanker could not be ascertained on Thursday afternoon.

In reaction, angry members of the public sacked the police station, a few minutes after the remains of the deceased were

evacuated from the scene.

It was, however, learnt that the police station was deserted before the protesters attacked it. The police station was eventually torched by the protesters.

The authorities of the Joint Task Force in the Niger Delta, Operation Restore Hope, later deployed soldiers and policemen in the area. Two Armoured Personnel Carriers

attached to the JTF were also moved to the sacked police station.

It was learnt that the Sector 1 Commander of JTF, Colonel Jamil Sarham, authorised the deployment of the troops and the APCs.

The Sector Commander of FRSC in Delta State, Mr. Luka Ikpi, confirmed the incident in a telephone interview with our correspondent.

## Unpaid salaries: ASUU accuses FG of victimising members

**Chukwudi Akasike, Uyo**

**A**NGERED by the withholding of its members' salaries, the Academic Staff Union of Universities has accused the Federal Government of victimisation.

The union described the government's refusal to pay its members their August and September salaries as 'unacceptable' and contrary to the agreement reached before its three-month old strike was

suspended.

Speaking with our correspondent on Thursday, the Chairman of ASUU, University of Uyo chapter, Dr. Ashong Ashong, said federal university lecturers were angry at the government's sudden change of mind.

Ashong said though the Federal Government might not view its decision as victimisation, the action amounted to violating the agreement between it and ASUU.

Explaining that university

"A tanker fell on a bus; and from information available to us (FRSC), the six people in the bus died. All the six people are women. Three persons, made up of two men and one woman, were injured," Ikpi said.

The Commissioner of Police, Delta State Police Command, Mr. Yakubu Alhikali, declined to comment on the incident. He claimed to be in a meeting on the four occasions our correspondent contacted him on the phone.

authorities were not to blame for the situation, Ashong stated that the National Universities Commission had advised the Federal Government not to pay the outstanding arrears.

He said, "It is not the fault of the management of the universities. Rather it is the fault of the Federal Government. We have been paid our October salaries.

"But the executive secretary of the NUC wrote to the Accountant-General of the Federation to advise him (Accountant-General) not to pay our August and