

PUNCH METRO

Another Lagos inferno claims 10 lives, 23 vehicles at Lagos-Badagry Expressway

Sesan Olufowobi, Mudiaga Affe,
Success Nwogu and Samson Echenim

NO fewer than 10 people were feared dead in Lagos State on Tuesday after a fuel tanker truck loaded rammed into other vehicles, causing an inferno. The fire also consumed about 23 vehicles at Adodo junction by Mowo bus stop, Badagry.

The disaster, which is coming two days after a similar one that consumed 17 vehicles and six people in Ibafo, Ogun State, was said to have happened around 4pm on Tuesday.

A version of the cause of the incident revealed that the truck had a break failure and lost control before running into some stationery vehicles parked at a Mechanic Village along the Lagos-Badagri Expressway.

But the Special Assistant to Lagos State Governor on Transportation, Mr. Kayode Opeifa, said the truck was trying to negotiate into another side of the road when it fell on some stationery vehicles and spilled its content. The impact, according to him, started the fire.

A witness, Olamide Kazeem, told one of our correspondents on the telephone that the fire spread. "Before you know it, the truck had gone up in flames and within a twinkle of an eye it had affected 23 other vehicles. People there were running helter-skelter and drivers were making a U-turn to avoid being caught in the inferno," she said.

Some of the Adodo villagers said that some people escaped from their vehicles with various degrees of burns, while an unspecified number of people were not as lucky as they were trapped in the fire and feared dead.

It was gathered that a pregnant woman, identified as Mama Egwu, was badly burnt and was rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment.

"It is still a mad house here; we don't know how many people died. But I am sure that some people were not able to run for safety. Some people however escaped. But the good thing was that many of the vehicles affected were the ones parked by the Mechanic Village," Kazeem said.

The villagers claimed that the men of the Lagos State Fire Service



did not arrive at the scene of the inferno until almost an hour after the fire had started.

"Policemen and Customs officials arrived there before the fire fighters. They started rescue operation before the fire service men came," they said.

The Lagos Sector Commander, Federal Road Safety Corps, Mr. Jonas Agwu, who confirmed the incident in an interview with one of our correspondents on the telephone, however, said the fire claimed one life and burnt 23 vehicles parked at the mechanic village.

Agwu said that the driver of the petrol tanker escaped unhurt. The Lagos State Police spokesman, Mr. Frank Mba, gave the registration number of the tanker as XB 142 UMZ.

"We are yet to determine the circumstance of the accident that

caused the inferno, but as I am talking to you now, we have picked one charred body. Rescue operation is still on. Citizens are advised to stay calm as we are fully on ground and on top of the situation," he said. Mba put the number of the burnt vehicles at 22.

The Adodo inferno is the third of such disasters that have caused by trucks within three weeks.

On Sunday, August 15, at the Otedola Millennium Estate end of the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, no fewer than 40 people lost their lives. About 25 vehicles were damaged in the inferno.

On Sunday, September 5, it was the same story at Ibafo end of the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway.

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