



BRT bus crushes man helping children cross road

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Tragedy struck in Surulere area of Lagos on Tuesday as a 62-year-old man, Mr. Abayomi Balogun, was crushed to death by a blue bus of the Bus Rapid Transit opposite the Office of the Lagos State Public Defender, Funsho Williams Avenue.

According to an eyewitness identified simply as John, Balogun was about to cross the lane when the bus with registration number XL 852 KTU and code number 82, which was on top speed, hit him and crushed his head. He died instantly.

John, who has a business opposite the BRT lane where the accident occurred, said, "The BRT driver and his assistant promptly abandoned the bus and ran away. When the passengers in the bus realised what had happened, they all scampered out of the bus and ran away too."

"The whole area was agog with rampaging youths from the neighbourhood, protesting the death of the man."

The youth reportedly wanted to burn all BRT buses within the vicinity before they were prevailed on by the family of the deceased.

Another eyewitness, who pleaded anonymity, said the deceased had already crossed the BRT lane but saw two school children who wanted to cross the road.

The witness said Balogun held the children's hands and took them across. But as he attempted to cross the lane again, he was knocked to the ground by the bus.

The deceased's brains, whose corpse had been deposited at the Surulere General Hospital, Lagos, had been covered with sand on the lane when *PUNCH METRO* visited the scene.

Passers-by and eyewitnesses were seen at the scene recording the gory sight with their mobile phone cameras.

When our correspondent visited Balogun's family at 14, Funsho Williams Avenue, Surulere, his relatives were still battling with the dilemma of how to tell his elder sister identified simply as Alhaja Suleiman about the sad news.

PUNCH METRO found out that the incident happened around 7am when school pupils were on their way to schools. It was learnt that the deceased had on Monday night complained about cold and on Tuesday told

his relatives that he was going to a hospital for medical check up.

A niece of the deceased, Mrs. Kudirat Ogunsanya, told *PUNCH METRO* amid sobs that she had to look for elders in the neighbourhood to assist in breaking the news to Balogun's sister.

A nephew of the deceased, who spoke on behalf of the family, Mr. Kehinde Bakare, said the incident was an indescribable pain for the family.

"This kind of death is not the kind anybody would wish an elderly person. The drivers of these buses drive sometimes like madmen. They believe when they are on that lane they are the gods of the road. That is something the government would have to look into. Something should be done to curb the excesses of these drivers," Bakare said.

The family has since made a statement at the Area C Police Station, Surulere.

Mr. Muibi Oladosu, the Investigating Police Officer, who has been assigned to the case in the Traffic Section of the station, said the management of the BRT had been notified.

"They would produce the driver. We have already called them," he said.

But the police seem not to be convinced by Akolade's alibi as they said the suspect's mental state would have to be determined by a psychiatric hospital.

Jinadu said, "The corpse of Titilayo has since been deposited at the mortuary of the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, Ikeja, where an autopsy is being done in order to determine the extent of injuries sustained through the particular act of her husband."

"Meanwhile, Akolade himself will be examined (mentally) in order to know what exactly went wrong and why he actually perpetrated the act."

When Akolade appeared before journalists in the office of the PPRO, he fainted but was quickly revived

The source said, "Akolade said they had been having issues since the day they got married so much that he contemplated divorcing Titilayo. He said because he was a spiritual person and a pastor, he decided to hang on."

Akolade told us that "he regretted that decision because he should have been bold enough to divorce her and then face the consequences instead of this mess he found himself in."

He reportedly went on to say that he never had plans to marry Titilayo as he had a lady he was dating but married her because of the pregnancy she was carrying for him, adding that he only succumbed to marry her when the pressure from her family became too much for him to bear.

Akolade reportedly denied stories that he was frustrated because of his unemployment, stating that he had veered into cashew exporting business.

The source said Akolade informed the police that after their marriage, he was responsible for the initial payment of the house rent but admitted that his wife assisted him in making subsequent payments.

The suspect reportedly told the police that after Titilayo had killed herself, he ran to his family members to report himself after which they went to Ejigbo Police Station where he was moved to Aswani Police Station and subsequently to the State Criminal and Investigation Department, Musiliu Smith Street, Yaba.

However, when Akolade's lawyer, Mr. Vincent Obianoyi, was quizzed by journalists, he said, "The matter is still under investigation and it will be very dangerous to make certain comments until police reports are out. So, everyone should keep their gunpowder dry."

While insinuating that Titilayo's murder was caused by spiritual forces, Obianoyi said, "We feel that this whole saga may have been masterminded by a far relative of the deceased who has never seen anything good in my client and has always been against the marriage."