

# PUNCH METRO

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## Eight die in Ogun accident



•Scene of the accident

**Kunle Falayi**

**A**t least eight people died on Sunday in an accident involving a 14-seater Toyota Hiace on the Sagamu-Ore Expressway.

PUNCH METRO learnt that the bus was hired for a wedding in Ondo State and was on its way back to Lagos when it ran into a pothole about few metres to Iperu Junction. The bus tumbled, killing most of its occupants.

The driver of the bus with registration number FB 687 LFR was among the dead.

According to eyewitnesses, the driver lost control when one of the front tyres of the bus burst after entering one of the potholes on the bad road.

"The tyre as you can see, are worn. I got here few minutes after the accident. I recall the bus which was passing by us on top speed. I was stunned at the speed of the bus. We did not imagine this is how it would end up," one of the eyewitnesses, Bukola Akinniranye, said.

Some pedestrians, who were around the scene when the bus tumbled, corroborated this account.

"I was heading in the opposite direction when I heard a loud noise and realised that the bus had turned on its side. I recall seeing the bus speeding excessively," another eyewitness, Mr. John Akinyemi, said.

The accident caused a gridlock on the ever-busy highway but policemen who arrived the scene about 10 minutes after the accident, made frantic efforts to clear the road.

The policemen also made attempts to call their divisional office, so that officials of the Federal Road Safety Corps could be contacted.

Sympathisers also tried to take few critically injured passengers to hospital.

"These injured people have a slim chance of surviving if they are not taken to hospital soon," an unidentified rescuer

said.

Most of the passengers wore the same attire used for the wedding.

While some sympathisers expressed anger at the absence of FRSC officials

at the scene about half an hour after the accident, others turned their vituperation on the government for failing to rehabilitate the road.

"This happens on many other expressways across this country. I wish our government officials will be humane enough to find a solution to this kind of problems. People keep dying and our government keeps making promises," a sympathiser, Chuks Ebiere, told PUNCH METRO.

When our correspondent contacted the FRSC commander in charge of Sagamu unit, Mr. Lasisi Ogundele, on the phone, he said it was not true that his men did not get to the scene on time.

"We got there within minutes we were notified of the accident. The dead included three women and five men," he said.

Ogundele also said the injured had been taken to the Olabisi Onabisi University Teaching Hospital while the corpses were deposited at the mortuary of Fakoya Hospital in Sagamu.

He also confirmed that the bus belonged to Itire-Ikate Local Council Development Area of Lagos State.

## Man arrested with pistols on way to PDP primaries

**Etim Ekpimah, Uyo**

**M**r. Emmanuel Euba, a man who claimed to be a graduate of the University of Calabar, was on Saturday arrested with four locally-made pistols by men of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency.

Euba, 32, a native of Ogun State, was said to be travelling from Calabar, Cross River State to Bayelsa State when the NDLEA officials decided to conduct a search on a 14-seater bus conveying him and other passengers at Nkim Itam, on the Calabar-Itu Road.

PUNCH METRO learnt that all the passengers were ordered out of the bus and when their bags were searched, the officials found the guns in Euba's bag.

The suspect said, "I was on my way to Bayelsa for the Peoples Democratic Party governorship primaries. I boarded a bus from Calabar, and on my way to Port Harcourt along Nkim Itam in Akwa Ibom State, we were stopped by NDLEA officials for a search.

"We were 15 passengers in all, including the driver. When the guns were found in the bag, I claimed ownership of it. I was immediately arrested and led to the NDLEA office on Nwaniba Road, Uyo, along with other passengers."

Euba said he was not a criminal but was going to Bayelsa State to provide "security

back-up" for one of the aspirants.

He claimed that in the previous elections in Bayelsa State, their supposed foes, intimidated, cheated, and killed one of his cousins.

He said, "At the last election in Bayelsa State, we were so intimidated that our lives were at stake. I was going back to Bayelsa State for the first time since the last election. I was contacted by my cousin who hails from there to work for somebody who is contesting in the election.

"The man does not know about the pistols; he will not allow it. So, in order not to be intimidated again, I got these pistols from Calabar for self-protection.

"I got the pistols from an old man known as doctor, who hails from Ogoja Local Government Area of Cross River State at the rate of N2,500 each. I know him; he is an old friend, he works in Kwara State."

However, he refused to give the name of his cousin who contracted him.

When asked if he had the telephone number of the doctor, Euba said, "I don't have his telephone number. He told me that he had



•Euba Photo: Etim Ekpimah

no telephone, but he has my number. He calls me with different numbers. I bought the pistols from him in June.

"I neither steal nor do bad things with them (pistols). I just wanted to protect myself and those I love. I could not get the bullets for them, so I had to take them along empty."