

7th March, 2014

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Vehicles crush 20 pupils in Anambra, C'River

MARCH 7, 2014 BY EMMANUEL OBE AND MUDIAGA AFFE

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Scenes of the Anambra accident.

| credits: *Emmanuel Obe*

A Toyota Camry lost control on Thursday and ran into some secondary school pupils at the Umuokpu Junction along the old Onitsha-Enugu Expressway, Awka, Anambra State.

The victims were mostly pupils of the Community Secondary School, Umuokpu, and Union Secondary School, Amawbia.

No fewer than seven of them were feared dead, while 10 others were critically injured in the accident.

PUNCH Metro gathered that the pupils had just closed from school and were waiting by the side of the road to catch transportation home when the car ran into them.

One of the victims, an old man, had his right leg broken, his right eyes cut open, while a whitish substance oozed out of his forehead.

One of the pupils feared dead in the accident had her head crushed. The unnamed pupil, who was said to be of Union Secondary School, laid lifeless on the road when *PUNCH Metro* visited the area.

Another victim was trapped under a commercial bus that tried to avoid colliding with the Toyota Camry.

The car also rammed into the people selling fruits and recharge cards and left several traders injured.

Sympathisers were seen trying to rescue the victims. In the confusion, the driver of the car, who also sustained injury, was seen as he climbed out of the mangled car, crossed to the other side of the road and took a cab away from the scene.

Officials of the Federal Road Safety Corps arrived 20 minutes after the accident, but the victims had been taken to nearby hospitals. The FRSC officials later towed the car away.

The Anambra State Sector Commander of the FRSC, Mr. Hyginus Omeje, said, "I am aware of the accident. I am, however, waiting for my men to give me the full details of what happened."

In a related development, a seven-year old pupil, Gideon Patrick, of Atimbo Primary School in Calabar Municipal Council Area of Cross River State was on Wednesday crushed by a truck while returning from school.

A witness said, "The truck was climbing Atimbo hill when it lost control and hit Patrick before ramming into a nearby building, knocking down two other pupils."

The duo, David Onoyom and Daniel Emmanuel Ekanem, became unconscious and were rushed to the hospital.

It was learnt that the driver of the truck was immediately arrested by naval officers. A part of the building was also destroyed.

A police team, led by the State Traffic Commander, Mr. Ojo Joseph, later arrived at the scene to maintain law and order.

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