

Six Ekiti doctors, driver perish in auto crash

April 26, 2016

Minister of Health, Isaac Adewole

Kamarudeen Ogundele and Adelani Adepegba

Six members of the Ekiti State branch of the Nigerian Medical Association, including their driver, on Sunday lost their lives in a road traffic accident along Abuja-Kaduna Expressway.

The men were on their way to Sokoto for the 56th NMA Annual General Conference/Annual Delegates Meeting when their vehicle was involved in a fatal crash. It was gathered that the rear tyre of the vehicle burst while the driver was speeding.

The impact, it was gathered, set the vehicle on a ghastly somersault, killing the six medical doctors and the driver while others were injured.

The Ekiti NMA Chairman, Dr. John Akinbote, who survived the accident, told one of our correspondents on Monday that

survivors were still receiving treatment at an undisclosed hospital in Kaduna.

A statement on Monday in Abuja co-signed by the NMA President, Dr. Kayode Obembe, and the Secretary-General, Dr. Adewumi Alayaki, identified the deceased as Dr. Alex Akinyele, Secretary, NMA Ekiti Federal Teaching Hospital, Ido Ekiti and Dr. Tunde Aladesanmi, General Surgeon, FTH, Ido Ekiti.

Others are Dr. O.J. Taiwo, anatomic pathologist, Ekiti State University Teaching Hospital, Ado-Ekiti; Dr. Ogunseye J.B., of the National Association of General and Government Medical and Dental Practitioners and National Secretary, Hospital Management Board, Ekiti; Dr. Olajide O., President, Association of Resident Doctors, EKSUTH; Dr. Atolani Adeniyi, Secretary, NAGGMDP, Ekiti State; and Mr. Ajibola, the NMA Ekiti driver.

The statement added that survivors “are in stable condition and are receiving medical attention under the auspices of the Chairman of the Kaduna State NMA and his team.”

It stated that the bereaved families had been contacted and arrangements were being made to convey the bodies back to Ekiti State, adding that burial arrangements would be communicated in due course.

The NMA said it had sent its representatives to Kaduna for an on-the-spot assessment and to complement the effort of the Kaduna medical team.

“While the conference continues, the National Officers’ Committee hereby directs that all doctors should observe one week of mourning from Tuesday, April 26 to Tuesday, May 3, 2016. Every doctor should put on black band on the left arm over white overall,” the NMA directed.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Health, Prof. Isaac Adewole, has commiserated with the President and all members of the NMA over the loss of their colleagues.

A statement by the Director, Media and Public Relations, Ministry of Health, Boade Akinola, said the minister prayed for the quick recovery of the survivors.

Also, the Ekiti State Governor, Ayodele Fayose, has declared a three-day mourning, describing the situation as the lowest point in the history of the state and a monumental loss, not only to the people of Ekiti State but to Nigerians.

The three days of mourning which started on Monday would end on Wednesday.

Fayose, according to a statement by his Special Assistant on Public Communications and New Media, Lere Olayinka, has directed that all flags should be flown at half-mast.

"Ekiti has lost some of the best trees in its forest of medicine. I am deeply sad. This is one loss too many.

"Death of seven prominent indigenes of a state in one day and at the same period is a burden too heavy to bear. It is my prayer that God, who is the only Giver and Taker of life, will give Ekiti people the fortitude to bear this irreparable loss."

The governor urged families, friends and professional colleagues of the deceased, especially members of the NMA to take solace in God.

Also, the Speaker of the Ekiti State House of Assembly, Kola Oluwawole, has condoled with the people of the state, particularly members of the NMA over the death of the six

doctors.

Oluwawole, in a condolence message signed by his Special Assistant (Media), Stephen Gbadamosi, said it was a grievous moment, not only for Ekiti State, but also the entire nation and its health sector.

But activities at hospitals in Ekiti State were paralysed on Monday as medical workers protest the untimely death of the medical doctors.

At the Federal Teaching Hospital, Ido Ekiti the protesting members of staff alleged that a top member of the management of the hospital was behind the death.

An eyewitness said medical workers trooped out as early as 7am and locked the main gate of the hospital in protest, which caused panic among patients and their families.

The Publicity Secretary of the Senior Staff Association of University Teaching Hospitals, Ekiti State branch, Mr. Tope Ogunleye, said, "This isn't really a protest, we are just using this avenue to register our grievances.

"Yesterday afternoon, we had a terrible incident where three of our doctors here lost their lives in a ghastly vehicle accident. The three doctors are Dr. Alex Akinyele, Dr. Tunde Aladesanmi and Dr. Adeniyi.

"We are worried that this tragic incident is becoming too regular. Sometime last year, we lost four of our members. It is more worrisome that we learnt that all this is happening because so many diabolical things have been going on in the hospital."

However, the FETHI's Chief Medical Director, Dr. Lawrence

Ayodele, described the death as a national disaster.

“It is not about the state, but the whole country because it involves six senior doctors and a driver. On behalf of the entire hospital community, we pray that this kind of very sad event would not happen again. We need a period of prayer to put an end to this kind of ugly incident.”

Ayodele appealed to the workers not to allow emotion to override their sense of reasoning.

“I got the information this morning. But let me say that it is normal that when there is a grief, people can bring up any kind of emotion. But we should not allow emotion to override our thinking and grief should not push us to doing what we are not supposed to do. I plead with them to be peaceful.”

The CMD said the families of the deceased had been contacted by both the state government and the NMA.

At EKSUTH in Ado-Ekiti, workers were seen in groups discussing the accident in hushed tones.

The CMD of EKSUTH, Dr. Kolawole Ogundipe, said the management had sent five ambulances to Kaduna to evacuate the corpses of the deceased.

Ogundipe, who appealed to members to be peaceful, prayed that God would grant the NMA, the deceased's families and the Ekiti government the fortitude to bear the loss.