

Two feared dead, 31 vehicles razed in tanker fire

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Two persons are feared dead after a tanker loaded with petrol skidded off the road and spilled its content at Coconut under bridge along Apapa Road, Lagos State, and later caught fire.

No fewer than 29 vehicles parked in a mechanic workshop under the bridge were also burnt, while two cars inside a garage in the area were razed.

PUNCH Metro learnt that trouble started after some miscreants besieged the tanker, which fell at about 8pm on Sunday, to scoop fuel into jerrycans

They were reportedly running away from the scene when a jerrycan fell from one of them and subsequently caught fire.

It was gathered that two persons were trapped in the fire, which spread back to the scene of the accident and caused the tanker to explode.

Our correspondent, who visited the scene on Monday, counted 25 burnt vehicles apart from the tanker as mechanics lamented their losses.

One of the victims, Friday Asuquo, said five vehicles brought by his customers for repairs were destroyed by the inferno, which raged for about two hours.

He said, “I came to park a Toyota Matrix around 7pm yesterday (Sunday). As I got home, I was called on the telephone that a tanker fell and it resulted in a fire incident. The fire didn’t break out immediately. Some *area boys* were scooping fuel from the tanker and it led to a fire incident.

“Apart from the Toyota Matrix, three Jeeps of different brands, and a *Big Daddy* Toyota brought by my customers were burnt. One of my customers has come, I am still expecting others to come for us to discuss. About 30 vehicles were burnt in this workshop. Some have been removed.”

Another mechanic, Shola Adebayo, told *PUNCH Metro* that he was relaxing at home when his apprentice called him. He said four of his customers’ vehicles – Toyota Sienna, Toyota Camry, a pick-up and ML – were razed.

“It was a great loss to me and I don’t know what to tell the owners of the vehicles. My income is not enough to cater to my family; but I believe God is in control.

“Two of those scooping fuel suffered serious burns, but I don’t know whether they are alive or dead,” he added.

A member of a union at the garage, Sulyman Olanrewaju, said the fire started about an hour after the tanker fell.

Olanrewaju said, “Speeding caused the accident. Then hoodlums began to scoop fuel from the tanker. Some people tried to chase them away. In the process, one of them fell while running away with the fuel in a jerrycan and it resulted in the fire. The boy was caught in the fire and was rushed to a hospital. I am not sure that he will survive.”

“The two cars that got burnt here were brought for repainting. It was unfortunate that the hoodlums engaged in this kind of act to wreak havoc on the property of innocent people.”

A sympathiser, who did not disclose his name, lamented the losses caused by the accident, saying that the tanker driver fled the scene.

PUNCH Metro learnt that it took the joint effort of officials of the Lagos State Fire Service and the state emergency management agency to put out the fire.

The fire service director, Rasaq Fadipe, said the driver had wanted to negotiate a sharp bend under the bridge, adding that firefighters from four stations were deployed to put out the fire.

He said, “The vehicle might have just left a depot and was going towards Mile 2. The driver lost control of the vehicle and the tanker fell, resulting in an explosion.

“The fire trailed the spilled content to a mechanic yard, where over 50 vehicles were parked. Twenty one caught fire, but we were able to prevent over 30 vehicles from being burnt. Fire stations from Alausa, Sari Iganmu, Ilupeju and Isolo responded. There was no casualty.”

Fadipe also advised motorists against speeding and urged them to always have functioning fire extinguishers in their vehicles.