

Otedola Crash Inferno: Death toll rises as residents cry out over explosion trauma

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Visionscape Sanitation Solutions Monitoring and Intervention team providing clean-up services at the scene of the fire incident on the Otedola Bridge, along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, Lagos... on Thursday. Photo: Visionscape

Samson Folarin, Tope Omogbolagun, Joy Marcus, Dolapo Akitoye and Favour Mike-Ewewie

One of the injured victims of the tanker fire accident at the Otedola Bridge, Lagos end of the Lagos Ibadan Expressway died on Friday.

SUNDAY PUNCH learnt that the victim, who sustained 90 per cent burns, died late Friday at the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital Annex, Gbagada.

It had been reported that no fewer than nine people lost their lives as 54 vehicles were consumed by the inferno on Thursday after the tanker had a crash and emptied its content on the road.

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Vehicles trailing the tanker were reportedly trapped and burnt by the fire, which raged for a few hours before it was put out by firefighters from the Lagos State Fire Service.

The Chief Medical Director of LASUTH, Prof. Wale Oke, told our correspondent on Saturday that seven burn victims were admitted to the hospital and its annex at the Gbagada General Hospital.

He said while one of the victims was dead, medical personnel were recording progress on the treatment of the other six persons.

Oke said, “We had seven burn victims. Five were admitted to the Burns and Trauma Unit, Gbagada, while two were admitted to LASUTH, Ikeja.

“One out of the two victims at LASUTH has been discharged because his burns were not much. The other one has 40 per cent burns and he is still in the ward responding slowly to treatment.

“There were five at Gbagada — four males and one female. There was a man with almost 90 per cent burns. He died last night (Friday). I saw the other four this morning and they are making slow progress. We hope they will continue to improve.”

Oke said the government had started making plans to use the state forensic lab to identify the burnt bodies.

One of the key rescue management workers said relatives of some of the dead victims had started making contact with the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency.

She explained that the agency was considering setting up a help desk for people whose relatives might have been involved in the incident.

Oke added, “I can say that most of the people who died in the fire were not the occupants of the vehicles because when we searched all the vehicles, none of them had a single corpse. Most of the people who died were passersby and I was even told one of them was a policeman.

“We recovered two of the bodies in a gutter and three by the roadside. Most of the occupants of the vehicles escaped on sighting the fuel pouring on the road. We have no reason to reduce the number of casualties. We cannot take the bodies away without bagging them. The fatality figure is nine. The number of injured may have been more because some of the survivors could have left the scene to treat themselves.