

Tanker fire death rises to 12, LASG to try driver

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• My son will return alive – Missing boy’s mum

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The death toll in Thursday’s oil tanker fire on the Otedola Bridge end of the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, Lagos, has risen to 12.

PUNCH Metro had reported that a truck loaded with petrol crashed on the bridge and spilled its content on the expressway, causing fire that destroyed 54 vehicles and killed nine persons.

The Lagos State Commissioner for Health, Dr Jide Idris, at a news conference on Monday said the death toll had hit 12, adding that the government was set to conduct DNA tests to identify the dead bodies burnt beyond recognition.

Idris explained that the victims of the accident were taken to three hospitals – Accident and Emergency Centre at Tollgate, the Trauma and Burns Centre at the Gbagada General Hospital, and the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, Ikeja.

He said seven patients were received at the facilities, adding that five of the victims, comprising four male and a female with varying degrees of burns, were taken to the Trauma and Burns Centre.

“Unfortunately, we lost one of the patients, who had 90 per cent burns. The remaining four victims are stable and responding to treatment.

“Additionally, two patients – a 48-year-old male with extensive burns, and a 42-year-old male with soft tissue injuries – were brought to the Burns and Plastic unit, LASUTH. One of them has been discharged, while the other person is responding to treatment,” he said.

Idris said from available statistics, 10 persons, including a minor, lost their lives to the fire as they were burnt beyond recognition, adding that the state government got reports of other survivors who were receiving treatment in some private hospitals.

He noted that of the two people receiving treatment in private hospitals, one of them had died to bring the total death arising from the accident to 12.

The commissioner urged private hospitals with patients from the accident to alert the government for proper collation.

Idris also explained that the government decided to conduct the DNA test so that the right bodies could be handed over to the appropriate families for burial.

He said, “Samples would be taken from mothers or fathers of victims, children of victims, siblings of victims, uncles or aunts of victims. Such people should go to the Lagos State DNA and Forensic Centre where their samples would be collected beginning from today till Friday.”

The commissioner also said the entire cost of treatment of the survivors and the DNA test would be borne by the state government.

Also, at the end of the state security meeting on Monday, the government said it would prosecute the owner and driver of the tanker.

The state Commissioner of Police, Edgal Imohimi, who stated this, added that investigation into the accident was still ongoing.

He said, “I have just received a letter from the office of the Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice which stated very clearly the charges which we are going to prefer against the driver and the owner of that tanker. However, investigation is still ongoing.”

The CP added that the government had directed security agencies to intensify enforcement of relevant laws to ensure that the roads and highways in the state were safe for commuters to ply.

He also allayed fears over renewed threat of militancy in the creek areas of Epe, Imota and Agbowa, assuring that the state government, in collaboration with security agencies, was on top of the situation.

Meanwhile, the mother of Eyitayo, the missing three-year-old boy, Mrs Omolara Famojuro, has said she had not lost hope of finding him.

Omolara was with Eyitayo and his twin sister, Eyitomi, in a car when the accident happened.

While Omolara escaped with Eyitomi, Eyitayo was with the car driver, identified as Mr. Joseph.

The whereabouts of Eyitayo and Joseph had been unknown since the incident.

Speaking with *PUNCH Metro* on Tuesday, Omolara said she had yet to find her son.

“I am waiting to reunite with my son. I have not lost hope. As they are speculating on the social media that I have found him, so will it be. I will find him in Jesus Name,” she said.

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