

Two die, others injured in Lagos train crash

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Bus-train collision in Agege, Lagos. Twitter photo

Afeez Hanafi

Many commuters hanging on a moving train were crushed on Friday after the train crashed into a stationary commercial bus parked close to the railway line in the Agege area of Lagos State.

Although official report put the casualty figure at two, some eyewitnesses told *Saturday PUNCH* that seven persons died while several others were injured.

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Our correspondent saw some effects and remnants of the crushed victims at the scene.

It was learnt that the bus driver had just dropped off some passengers at a park – a few metres away – and parked the vehicle close to the railway line while he went to excrete in an uncompleted building.

Our correspondent gathered the bus conductor, who was looking after the vehicle, rushed to call the driver the moment he heard the blaring of the train's horns.

By the time the driver arrived to move the bus away from the spot, the train was said to be fast approaching as he and the conductor fled to safety.

A resident, Deji Olawunmi, said people hanging on the train, lost balance as it clung to the bus. He stated that some of them fell into the path of the speeding train and got crushed, while others jumped on heaps of sand around the scene.

He said, "The incident happened around 8am. A woman who was hawking food here warned the driver not to park the bus close to the railway line, but he said he would not stay long in the toilet. By the time he came back, it was late.

"The train hit the side of the bus and dragged it from the spot. There were many people hanging on the train. About seven persons were crushed to death. Some people who were able to escape broke their legs and hands. I was shivering when I saw the gory sight of the victims."

Another eyewitness, Olamide George, said a mob set the bus ablaze before policemen and other security agencies arrived to remove the wreckage.

George stated that some men, who escaped with minor injuries, took away one of the deceased. He added that a sum of N37,000 and a phone were found on one of the injured victims.

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George said the unnamed victim broke his legs and lamented that he just got married, while he was being rushed to a hospital by officials of the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency, who responded to the accident.

"Those that died in the accident would be up to seven if not more. The truth of it is that most of those people hanging on the train are hoodlums. Some of them sell Indian Hemp and all kinds of drugs there. It is a caucus and they will never allow a decent person to be with them," he added.

LASEMA General Manager, Adesina Tihamiyu, said two persons died in the crash while one other was injured and taken to the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, Ikeja, for treatment.

Tihamiyu urged people to desist from hanging on trains to avoid unnecessary loss of lives.

He said, “The agency received a distress call around 8:57am via the emergency’s toll free number that a passenger train collided with a parked commercial bus, forcing three of the hanging passengers to fall off the moving train.

“One adult sustained injuries and was transferred to LASUTH. Unfortunately, two other adults lost their lives. They had been taken to a mortuary by the State Environmental Health Monitoring Unit.”

The Lagos State Police Command spokesperson, CSP Chike Oti, said the police had a record of one fatality and an injured victim.

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