

# New Year's Eve tragedy: 12 die in Ibadan road crash

**Published** January 2, 2019



Accident scene

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With about 15 minutes to the New Year, 12 lives were reportedly lost in a road crash on Monday near the Bola Ige International Market, Gbagi, along the new Ife-Ibadan Expressway in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital.

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Our correspondent gathered that the victims were crushed to death by a truck coming from the Iwo Road area, which reportedly rammed into commercial buses and other vehicles by the entrance to the market.

Around the same time, firefighters were battling to extinguish an inferno that had engulfed goods estimated at several millions of naira at a shopping complex within the Lekan Salami Stadium, Adamasingba, in the Ekotedo area of Ibadan. No life was lost in the incident.

The Gbagi Market accident, which occurred around 11.45pm, led to gridlock that saw vehicles heading for Ile-Ife in Osun State stranded for several hours.

Although eyewitness could not say if the truck had suffered break failure or if the affected buses were carelessly parked on the road, sources confirmed that two people initially survived the accident and were taken to a nearby hospital, while about 12 other passengers were said to have died immediately.

Apart from the commercial buses, a Toyota Camry and Nissan Micra cars were also said to have been crushed by the truck.

Sources said that many of the victims were going to churches for the crossover service in the Iyana-Agbala and Egbeda areas of the city.

The situation also made many, who were on their way to churches for the service, to be stranded on the highway.

The dead victims included a pregnant woman, identified simply as Mrs Funmilayo, who was said to be on her way to her in-laws', a bus driver identified as '*Orobo Baba Welder*', and many others who could not be identified as of the time of filing this report.

Confirming the accident, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Adekunle Ajisebutu, however, put the casualty figure at 11.

A report by the Sector Commander of the Federal Road Safety Corps in the state, Mrs Cecilia Alao, indicated that 12 people died as a result of the accident and that their corpses had been deposited in the morgue of the Oyo State Specialist Hospital, Adeoyo.

She noted that aside the nine, who died on the spot, three others lost their lives on Tuesday, out of the 10 injured victims, who were taken to the Toun Specialist Hospital, Iwo Road, for medical attention.

The FRSC statement on the accident read in part, "The command recorded a fatal road traffic crash on Monday, December 31, 2018, around 11.45pm at Km 3 Gbagi, along the Ibadan-Ile-Ife highway.

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"Report of the crash was received at 11.56pm and was responded to accordingly by a detachment of FRSC standby rescue team within 11 minutes of the receipt of the information.

"Three vehicles with the following details were involved in the crash: a red DAF 85 truck with no number plate; a golden Toyota Camry salon car with number plate KJA 672 CG; and a white Toyota Hiace bus with number plate MUS 171 XF.

“A total of 19 people were involved in the crash, consisting of 10 male adults, eight female adults and one male child.

“As of the time of the conclusion of rescue operations, nine victims were confirmed dead and their corpses were deposited in the morgue of the Oyo State Specialist Hospital, Adeoyo, while 10 injured victims were conveyed to the Toun Specialist Hospital, Iwo Road area, for medical attention.

“Subsequent hospital follow-up conducted by the command on Tuesday, January 1, 2019, indicated that additional three victims had also died, making the total fatality figure of 12, consisting of eight male adults, three female adults and one male child, while seven injured victims made up of two male adults and five female adults are still on admission and receiving treatment.”

The report added, “Preliminary investigation suggests that brake failure resulting in the loss of control was the causative factor of the road crash.

“Meanwhile, road obstruction caused by the multiple crashes was duly cleared by the FRSC personnel around 2.14am on January 1, 2019, thereby ensuring the sustenance of smooth traffic flow.

“Whilst it is crucial to commiserate with the families of the deceased and wish the injured quick recovery, it is imperative to state that effective maintenance of vehicle components and general adherence to safety rules are strongly recommended to forestall a recurrence of the unfortunate accident.”

An eyewitness, Waris Olatunde, said that a bus belonging to his boss, ‘*Orobo Baba Welder*’ had loaded passengers on the spot of the crash and was ready to commence its journey to Ile-Ife when the truck crossed the road and crushed the vehicles.

Olatunde, who claimed to be the conductor of the bus, said he narrowly escaped death because the driver had paid him N200 and asked him to go back home instead of joining him on the trip.

He said, “It was God that saved me. Usually, I use to collect money for him from passengers before he would leave the park, but in this case, he said since it was late already, I should take N200 and go

home.

“He told me that he would collect the fare himself from the passengers. The man just closed the side door of the vehicle and before he entered from the driver’s side, the trailer had crossed to his side and killed everyone in the vehicle. A Toyota Camry and some Nissan Micra cars were also crushed.”

Another eyewitness, who claimed to be a neighbour of the deceased pregnant woman, Mrs Iseoluwa Opeyemi, stated amid tears that the woman, popularly called Funmilayo, was on her way to her mother-in-law’s place at the Iyana Agbala area of the city when the accident occurred.

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She said, “The deceased was a very hardworking woman. Her family just moved to their new house last Saturday and she died last night.

“She came to our house and told us that she was going to her mother-in-law’s place, unknown to us that she was going to die. Her only son, who survived the crash, is now in the hospital. I was there this morning and the boy is recuperating, though his head was partially injured. I pray the little boy survives this.”