

# 12 die, buildings razed in Gombe tanker explosion

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Published [April 14, 2019](#)

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## Chima Azubuike

No fewer than 12 persons lost their lives while 15 other were injured when a fuel tanker crashed and exploded in Bomala bridge, Gombe, on Saturday

Also, two buildings, a table water distribution vehicle, a tricycle and a motorcycle were among several facilities that were lost to the crash.

The crash also threw the area into darkness as the tanker also destroyed the poles supplying power to the area.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Mary Malum, confirmed that 12 persons died in the explosion.

“The number of the dead has increased to 12 and 15 persons were injured. I can confirm that,” Malum said in a telephone interview with the *SUNDAY PUNCH* on Saturday.

Officials of the police, Red Cross, Federal Road Safety Corps and men of the Gombe Fire Service were at the scene of the accident trying frantically to put out the fire as it appeared that the equipment on the ground were inadequate.

An eyewitness, Adamu Kabo, who spoke to our correspondent, said, “The fuel tanker’s brake failed as it approached the Bomala bridge. The driver struggled with the truck, ran into an Atlantis table water distribution vehicle, a motorcycle and a tricycle, and pushed them away from the bridge. The impact of this accident is massive.”

Another eyewitness, Hasidu Abdulahi, told *SUNDAY PUNCH* that it took the effort of the Gombe and the Pantamin Police Division personnel to get water from a private water tanker to put out the fire of the truck as the Gombe Fire Service officials, who had gone to get more water, took too long in returning.

Hasidu said, “We decided to use sand and water to fight the fire since help was far.

“We noticed that the tanker driver was struggling on the bridge. A part fell into the dry canal and the other part was left on the bridge burning.”

A member of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, who was identified as Ibrahim, lamented that the fire service lacked adequate manpower and technical support to combat the inferno.

“For over three hours, they found it difficult to put out the fire. They kept going back and forth. The reinforcement they called for took over 50 minutes to arrive.” he said.

While the police cordoned off the two sides of the bridge, some youths looted the packets of water in the table water distribution van.

Meanwhile, the governor of Gombe State, Dr. Ibrahim Dankwambo, who was outside the state on Saturday, has commiserated with victims of the tanker explosion.

Speaking through the Speaker of the Gombe State House of Assembly, Mr. Nasiru Nono, the governor said, “The governor is pained by this gas accident, and has promised to bear the cost of the victims’ medical bills. As a House, on Tuesday, we will extensively discuss the issues pertaining to another alternative bye pass as the growing population seems to have defeated its purpose.

The Speaker also visited the Federal Teaching Hospital, Gombe, where injured victims were receiving treatment.

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