

# One dies, shops burnt in Gombe tanker crash

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Scene of the Gombe tanker explosion

## • Gridlock as tanker spills diesel on Ogun Long Bridge

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A diesel-laden tanker fell and exploded in Tumfure along the Gombe-Bauchi Expressway on Wednesday, killing a motorcyclist.

An official of the Red Cross Society in Gombe, Mr Abass Mohammed, said the tanker was bound for Bauchi.

Mohammed stated, “Over an hour ago, I was informed of the accident. As the tanker, which was laden with diesel, was on its way out of the depot, there was a container carrier on its way. The tanker driver made an attempt to overtake the container carrier but he was not aware that there was a stationary truck ahead.

“The collision of the tanker with the truck caused the death of a motorcyclist and the razing of five shops.”

An eyewitness, Avohre Manza, who narrowly escaped from the scene of the accident, said, “As we were approaching the Rainbow roundabout, we saw the tanker coming out of the depot. All of a sudden, the tanker driver revved up the engine.

“We saw the driver attempting to change course, unfortunately, he hit the truck and the impact caused the diesel to spill. Someone tried to save the motorcyclist, who was trapped in the ensuing inferno, but could not due to the intensity of the fire.”

Officials of state fire service and other security agencies were seen at the scene of the accident extinguishing the fire and controlling human and vehicular traffic.

Meanwhile, motorists and commuters plying the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway on Wednesday spent several hours on the Long Bridge at the Ogun State end of the road as a result of a diesel-laden tanker, which fell and spilled its content.

*PUNCH Metro* gathered that the accident occurred when one of the rear tyres of the tanker, with number plate ZBL 422 XA, suddenly burst, causing the driver to lose control of the vehicle.

As a result, the tank detached from the other part of the vehicle and hit the ground, spilled its content and obstructed vehicular movement.

The spilled diesel flowed into the canal under the bridge, where hoodlums were seen scooping fuel into buckets and jerry cans.

A combined team of emergency responders, including officials of the Ogun State Traffic Compliance and Enforcement Corps, Ogun State Fire Service, the Lagos State Emergency Management Authority and the Nigeria Police Force, responded to the situation.

A driver, Oluranti Odunaiya, said he had spent seven hours trying to find his way out of the gridlock in order to get to his place of work in Lagos.

Odunaiya said, “I am coming from Ijebu Ode but encountered the gridlock at Warewa around 6am; I have been trying to navigate through the gridlock to no avail. I am not going to Lagos anymore, because I have spent about seven hours and I am still on the Long Bridge; once I leave the bridge, I will find a way to turn back home.

“What I saw when I got to the scene of the accident was that a tanker had fallen on the bridge and the emergency responders had to stop other vehicles for some time to diffuse the diesel with chemicals so that it would not be ignited. So, when the Ogun State Fire Service used water to flush the diesel off the road, it made its way into the perforated areas of the bridge and flowed into the canal.”

The Public Relations Officer, TRACE, Babatunde Akinbiyi, said, “The accident happened around 6am; our men met the fallen tanker on the road while on their early morning patrol of the area.

“The reason one can adduce for that is maybe the driver was tired as most of them travel all night and by the time they are approaching the last stretch, they get tired and drowsiness sets in, which can make them lose control. It could also be that the driver was trying to avoid a pothole when the accident happened.

“We learnt that the head of the tanker was already detached from the body because of the impact of the crash. Eventually, it was evacuated, but it took time to free the road as the content of the tank had spilled. The remaining content was transferred into another tanker.

“The Ogun State Fire Service also wet the ground with chemicals to ensure that the road was safe for motoring. The accident happened during the peak hours of the morning and that was why we had the gridlock. Officials of LASEMA were also on hand to help.”

The Chief Executive Officer, LASEMA, Dr Oluwafemi Oke-Osanyintolu, said the agency’s emergency response team was deployed in the area to salvage the situation.

“When the accident occurred, we activated our emergency response team to ensure the safety of lives and property. Although the scene of the accident is not Lagos, we had to move in to help.”

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