

Five adults, two kids killed in Obaseki's convoy crash

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Edo State Governor, Godwin Obaseki

•Edo govt commiserates with victims' families

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Seven persons – five adults and two children – were on Saturday morning killed in an auto accident involving the advance team of the Governor of Edo State, Godwin Obaseki, on the Benin-Auchi Expressway.

Several other persons, including one of the governor's drivers, were also injured in the accident.

Eyewitness account said the accident occurred at Ehorin Uhumwode Local Government Area when a Toyota Hilux van of the governor's advance team had a head-on collision with an Audi car.

The advance team was said to be on their way to Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma, for the convocation of the university.

Three survivors were reportedly taken to the Central Hospital in Benin City for medical attention.

It was learnt that a Good Samaritan rushed the survivors and the dead to the First Save Accident Victims Association of Nigeria Medical Centre.

At the Central Hospital, a source confirmed that accident victims were brought in but declined to give details.

It was learnt that arrangements were being made to take the driver of the van to a private hospital for adequate medical care.

The Commissioner of Police in the state, Danmallam Mohammed, confirmed the incident, describing it as “very unfortunate”.

Accident had nothing to do with gov’s convoy – FRSC

The Sector Commander, Federal Road Safety Corps, Edo State Command, Mr Anthony Oko, also confirmed the accident, but said it had “nothing” to do with the governor’s convoy.

He explained that the crash claimed the lives of the entire passengers of the Audi 80 car while the driver who was alone in the Hilux vehicle sustained minor injuries.

He also said five of the bodies were deposited at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital while the other two were taken to the morgue of the Central Hospital, Benin.

Okos stated, “It wasn’t actually a convoy of the governor; the governor came later and passed our men. So, it had nothing to do with the convoy of the governor. It was just a Government House vehicle involving a driver.

“Seven persons were killed – four male adults, one female adult, one female child and a male child. It was a collision very close to Ehor, between Ogbemudia and Ehor.

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“It was caused by speeding that led to loss of control. He (driver) drove into a pothole, lost control and rammed into the Hilux vehicle. The bodies were deposited in a morgue.”

Gov’s advance team involved in accident – Govt

Meanwhile, the Edo State Government countered the statement made by the FRSC by confirming that the accident involving the advance protocol team of Governor Obaseki was involved in the accident.

It also commiserated with the families of the victims and described the fatal crash as “extremely sad”.

In a statement by the Special Adviser to the Governor on Media and Communication Strategy, Mr Crusoe Osagie, it said, “We have confirmed from the Police and the Federal Road Safety Corps details of the accident involving the advance team of the governor’s protocol team.

“The development is extremely sad. We commiserate with the families of the victims and pray that God grant them the fortitude to bear the painful loss.

“From our findings, the Audi vehicle lost its tyre and ran into a pothole, before colliding with the Hilux vehicle, which was conveying protocol officers from Edo State Government House.”

The state, however, added that the state government would ensure that the affected families get the necessary support to lessen the impact of the incident.

In another development, members of the ruling All Progressives Congress in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State have faulted the suspension of the party’s secretary, Lawrence Okah, describing it as the handiwork of Governor Godwin Obaseki.

Members of the ward said on Saturday they were not ready to receive the governor in his planned ward visits.

Rising from an emergency meeting of leaders and members of Ward 7 in Oredo LGA, the APC members alleged that the action of the party chairman, Anselm Ojezua, was directed by Obaseki.

Both Obaseki and Okah come from the same Oredo LGA. While the governor comes from ward 4, Okah is from Ward 7.

The Chairman of the party in the ward, Osamudiamen Osarhekhoe, who spoke on behalf of others to journalists, berated the governor.

He accused Obaseki of being dictatorial in his approach, alleging that the governor had denied the ward representation in the state House of Assembly.

He said, “In his election, Ward 7 gave him the highest votes in Oredo; we gave him 35,000 votes. The most populated ward in Oredo today is Ward 7. Today, you are also suspending our leader, Lawrence Okah, accusing him of funding Edo People’s Movement – it is a blatant lie.”

The state chairman of the APC, Anselm Ojezua, had on Friday issued a letter of suspension to Okah.

Ojezua said the suspension was part of an administrative process not a punitive measure.

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Meanwhile, Obaseki has said his administration will sustain efforts to keep thugs off the streets in the state and ensure that they do not have space to operate.

Obaseki explained that the decision was part of the state government’s commitment towards attracting investors and to “ensure that Edo State is free from miscreants and thugs.”

The governor spoke when he received members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers, led by the union’s National President, Alhaji Ibikunle Tajudeen, at Government House in Benin City.