

## 27 die in Ogun tanker fire, Anambra, Rivers crashes, Benue herders' attack

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**A**bout 27 persons lost their lives in a tanker fire in Ogun State, road crashes in Anambra, Rivers states and an attack by suspected herders in Benue communities.

The Federal Road Safety Corps in Ogun State confirmed the death of 17 persons in a tanker fire around Isara Bridge, along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway.

The agency said most of the victims were burnt beyond recognition, calling on their relatives to contact the FRSC office in Ogere for more information. It was learnt that the accident happened around 5am on Friday.

The spokesperson for the FRSC in Ogun, Florence Okpe, explained that 14 of the bodies were burnt beyond recognition, adding that the FRSC operatives were able to identify one man, one woman and a girl.

She said, "The total number of people involved is not ascertained, but a total of 17 bodies have been identified. One male, one female, and one female child only have been identified, while others were burnt beyond recognition."

Explaining what led to the incident, Okpe said the tanker had a head-on collision with a Mazda bus with number plate, ZT728 KLD.

She said, "The suspected causes of the fatal crash were route violation and dangerous driving, which resulted in a head-on collision and fire outbreak."

Meanwhile, the Ogun FRSC Sector Commander, Ahmed Umar, described the crash as an avoidable one, urging motorists to obey traffic rules and regulations.

Umar commiserated with the families of the victims, enjoining them to contact the FRSC office in Ogere for more information about the crash.

In Anambra, two persons: an adult and a little child reportedly died when an unidentified driver of a Mercedes car with number plate, UWZ56XA, rammed into six other vehicles around a filling station on the Ihiala-Onitsha road.

Nine persons also sustained varying degrees of injury in the accident which occurred on Friday while 52 people were rescued unhurt.

According to eyewitnesses, about 63 people were involved in the crash. An eyewitness said the truck driver was speeding while approaching a police checkpoint, lost control and rammed into the vehicles in a queue at the checkpoint.

It was learnt that the Federal Road Safety Corps rescue team from the Ihialia Unit Command took the victims to Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Ihialia, where a male adult

and a male child were confirmed dead.

The dead victims were deposited at the hospital's morgue while the FRSC rescue team on the ground managed the traffic and removed the obstruction caused by the crash.

The FRSC Sector Commander, Anambra State, Adeoye Irelewuyi, commiserated with the families of the dead victims and wished the injured a quick recovery.

He, however, warned motorists to avoid speeding and comply with the recommended speed limit.

"Speed drills, but kills. Check your speed and not your watch. Let us keep our roads safe from crashes," he advised.

Our correspondent, who went round the Onitsha-Overri Road, known for police checkpoints and extortions, observed that police had deserted the spots at Idemili, Obosi, Oba, for fear of being attacked.

Meanwhile, five persons were reportedly killed on Thursday at two separate attacks in some communities in the Gwer West Local Government Area of Benue State by suspected herders.

Sources from the council area explained that four people were killed while others were injured in an attack on Tse Udeghe, Mabapa council ward of the local government.

The attack was said to have occurred around 4:30pm when suspected herders invaded the community in their

numbers.

It was also gathered that the same day around 7pm, some suspected herders lay in ambush on Naka-Makurdi

highway at Ahumen village

and shot at a moving bus, killing one occupant.

Confirming the report, the chairman of the local government, Mrs Grace Igabon, said five people were killed in the two attacks by suspected herders. She added that several thatched houses were torched.

Igabon said, "The incident happened around Thursday evening. We were at the venue where we were donating motorcycles to security operatives when the report came to me that Fulani herders were attacking Mabapa council ward."

"Four people were killed in the community including a man and his son. Unfortunately, some herders also blocked Makurdi/Naka highway and shot at a moving vehicle. A

lady was said to have been hit and died from bullets."

The chairman said that the council donated 10 motorcycles to the security operatives in the local government to facilitate movement of security men in fighting herdsmen militia in the council area.

She expressed concerns over persisted unprovoked attacks on the council.

When contacted, police spokesperson in the state, Catherine Anene, said she had yet to receive such reports.

Also, the car crash along the Akpajo-Elelenwo Road in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State claimed three lives on Friday.



## Valentine: Fun-seeker drowns in Lagos hotel pool, family suspects foul play

Afeez Hanafi

**W**hen Adekunle Ojo was enjoying Valentine's Day at a hotel in the Baruwa area of Lagos, he was oblivious that his life would end tragically inside a pool at the facility in the night.

The 27-year-old man reportedly drowned and his body

was retrieved from the pool with fresh marks on his body which made his family suspect foul play.

City Round learnt that Ojo, who lived on Unity Aghedo Estate, Ipaja, left home around 1pm that Monday to attend a poolside party at the hotel.

He was said to have swam in the pool after the party and had done about two rounds before the tragedy struck.

He was reportedly rushed to the Igando General Hospital where he was confirmed dead and the incident was reported at the Alagolo Police Station and the family was contacted.

Ojo's father, Femi, told our correspondent during the week that two of his children went to the hotel to get the details of circumstances surrounding the death.

He said, "When the incident happened, I didn't go there. What I know is that he went to the pool to swim and we heard the following day that he died. It was my son and daughter who went there to know what happened and they came to give me feedback."

One of the two siblings, Adenike, said the family and the hotel manager were invited by the police and the latter claimed Ojo stayed back after other guests had left.

She said, "My brother left the house around 1pm on Monday. A party was held by the pool side at the hotel. The next thing we heard on Tuesday morning was that he drowned. When we got to the police station, the manager said my brother was the only one at the pool side. He also said the life guard wasn't around at the time he was swimming."

"When we watched the CCTV footage, we saw that he entered the hotel around past 3pm. We even saw him dancing with one lady. At night, we saw that he pulled off his clothes, entered the pool and started swimming. He swam back and forth then, but we didn't see him again."

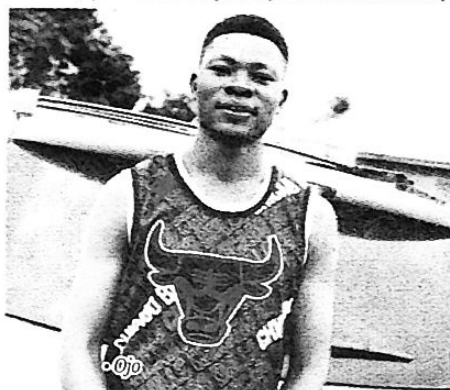
"We saw how people jumped into the water but we didn't see how they removed his body. We just saw that they already carried him out of the water. We didn't see how they removed his body. There are bruises on his head and back. What happened was not glaring enough so we want the matter to be investigated. What we saw on the CCTV was totally different from what the hoteliers told us."

When contacted on the phone, the hotel manager, identified only as Micahael, said he could not explain what really transpired that night.

He said, "I wasn't in the whole story. If you want to talk to anybody, maybe you should talk to the lifeguard. He will be in the best position to talk. I am headed somewhere now. Once I am free, I will send you his number."

When our correspondent called back, Micahael begged for more time to send the lifeguard's number but had yet to do so as of the time of filing this report.

The Police Public Relations Officer in the state, CSP Adekunle Ajisebutu, said two officials of the hotel had been apprehended and the case transferred to the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department. Pantti.



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