

# Ogun tanker chased by miscreants explodes, three killed, 12 vehicles burnt

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Three people were on Thursday burnt to death in an accident involving a fuel tanker at the Toll Gate end of the Lagos-Abeokuta Expressway, Ogun State.

Four others were injured and 12 vehicles burnt in the inferno, as goods worth millions of naira were destroyed.

Our correspondent, who visited the scene, gathered that the tanker driver, who was driving outward Lagos, sighted some money-seeking miscreants close to the Toll Gate and tried to avoid them.

He was said to have driven at top speed and veered into the Ilo Awela Road.

The tanker, laden with 35,000 litres of Premium Motor Spirit (petrol) reportedly upturned while ascending the sloppy road and spilled its content, which led to the fire.

An eyewitness, Segun Omojagun, who spoke to our correspondent, said the accident was caused by the miscreants.

He said, “The incident happened around past 1am and was caused by some area boys who extort money from truck drivers at night close to the Toll Gate. The tanker driver was trying to escape from them while driving fast. But by the time he got to the junction, he could not control his speed. That was how he drove into the bend, lost control and tumbled. The area boys ran away immediately the incident happened.”

Another eyewitness, Rufai Temitope, said the fire was caused by a spark from the exhaust of a commercial bus.

He said, “The fire did not start immediately the tanker fell. The petrol was still spreading across the road and drainage. The fire started when the driver of a commercial bus parked close to where the tanker fell rushed to move it away from

the scene. But by the time he started the engine, the exhaust of the vehicle caused a spark and ignited a fire. He died instantly, including the tanker driver, although the motor boy escaped.”

*PUNCH Metro* gathered that some vehicles and tricycles parked around the area got burnt.

Three BRT buses parked some meters away from the spot were also destroyed by the fire.

A middle-aged man, identified simply as Murphy, was said to have died while asleep in one of the tricycles.

Another transport worker, identified as Roadside, was said to be battling with his life after the fire caught up with him while also sleeping in his tricycle.

A motorcyclist and one other unidentified person also died in the fire.

A tricycle rider, Samson Oludairo, said his tricycle and his wife’s goods were destroyed by the fire.

He said, “I also got to know that my friend, who was sleeping in his tricycle got burnt to death. The other person who was also in one of the tricycles is now battling for his life. He was rejected by some hospitals he was taken to this morning, including FMC, before he was referred to LUTH. These people could not go home because they came from a long distance.”

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The fire also gutted some containerised shops by the roadside, as the owners counted their losses.

A shop owner, who gave her name only as Alhaja Ariyike, said the Ogun State Fire Service did not show up.

He said, “We have lost goods worth millions of naira to the fire. We called the Ogun State Fire Service, but they did not show up. They said there was no fuel and water. It was the Lagos State Fire Service that eventually showed up to put out the fire.”

Another shop owner, who did not provide her name as she wept uncontrollably, said she just stocked her shop with goods after borrowing money from a microfinance bank.

She said, “I am the only one taking care of my four children. I borrowed money from LAPO to stock my shop and everything has been destroyed. Where do I start from? How do I refund the money?”

Moses Bolajoko, who also owns a shop and operates a lotto kiosk, said he had lost four terminals to the fire.

He said, “We want you to help us appeal to our government. We have also been trying to know who owns the tanker, but the number plate has been removed. The police said there is nothing they can do to trace the owner.”

The spokesperson for the Federal Road Safety Corps, Ogun State, Florence Okpe, confirmed two casualties.

Okpe, in a statement on Thursday, explained that the tanker was ascending the Ilo Awele slope when it fell around 1.30am, spilled its content and went up in flames.

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She said, “Men of the fire service were contacted immediately and the area was cordoned off to prevent a secondary crash.

“As of 4.05am, a total of 12 vehicles were involved, which comprised three luxury buses, four tricycles, three motorcycles, one yellow bus and a tanker.

“A total of three persons were rescued to the Ota General Hospital (two male adults and one female adult), seriously burnt.

“Two bodies burnt beyond recognition have been evacuated from the scene.

“The suspected cause of the multiple crash was mechanical deficiency. While ascending, the vehicle rolled back and got hooked. The content spilled off and there was a fire incident.”

The Ogun State Commissioner for Information, Waheed Odusile, said the state government was investigating the cause of the accident.