

Edo campaign convoy crushes five to death

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The accident scene

By Adeyinka Adedipe

Tragedy struck at Warrake Road in Owan East Local Government area of Edo State on Thursday as the campaign convoy of the candidate of All Progressives Congress for the September 21 governorship election in the state,

Senator Monday Okpebholo, rammed into a Toyota Camry car, crushing five of the occupants to death.

The driver of the car, Emmanuel Edionwe, and four other occupants were said to have died on the spot, while another victim was rushed to the Irrua Specialist Hospital.

A source who witnessed the accident said that the campaign convoy was on top speed when one of the vehicles in it veered off and hit the Camry headlong.

The deceased were said to be returning from a funeral ceremony when they met their death.

The bodies of the deceased were said to have been deposited at the Edo State University, Uzaurie Mortuary in Etsako West Local Government Area of the state.

A relative of Edionwe, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said, “We are devastated beyond words. Emmanuel was a good, easy-going boy who should not have died.

“We just learnt that five of them have died after the collision with Okpebholo’s convoy. There is just one of them who is in critical condition and is now being nursed to life at the hospital.

“It was officials of the Federal Road Safety Corp that evacuated the bodies from the scene of the accident. Four of them died yesterday (on Thursday) and one died this morning (Friday). There is only one surviving person in critical condition.”

When contacted, Edo State Police Command Public Relations Officer, Moses Yamu, said that he would call the officers in Owan East to confirm the accident.

But when he was contacted again, the PPRO said that he was in traffic and would get back, but he never did as of the time of filing this report.

However, the Edo State Sector of the Federal Road Safety Corps confirmed the incident.

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Meanwhile, a commercial bus also plunged into the Ovia River in the state on the same Thursday evening.

Edo Sector Commander of the FRSC, Cyril Mathew, confirmed the incident, noting that divers had been contacted to recover the missing passengers.

Mathew said the accident occurred at about 4:20 pm when a bus travelling from Lagos and heading to Port Harcourt veered off the highway and plunged into the river.

He said FRSC began the rescue mission on Thursday and continued on Friday.

“Six people were rescued alive, while one was recovered dead on Thursday. A corpse was also recovered on Friday

“Unfortunately, the chances of survival of the remaining passengers in the river are slim, given that the accident occurred Thursday evening.

“We have engaged divers to help recover the bodies, but negotiations are ongoing. The divers are asking for N2m to carry out the job.”

He disclosed that some passengers who survived the crash said the driver lost control of the bus after experiencing brake failure.

“In a desperate attempt to avoid colliding with vehicles in front, the driver veered into the opposite lane, leaving the Ore-Benin-Lagos route and crossing over to the Benin-Ore Road.

“However, due to the speed of the vehicle, the driver was unable to regain control, causing the bus to hit a pavement and plunge into the river”, Mathew quoted the passengers.