

Death toll in Abia auto crash hits eight

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By Sunday Nwakanma

The death toll of the fatal accident on Sunday involving some travellers at the Mmuri River along Abam-Ohafia Road, in Abia State has risen to eight victims.

The Abia Sector Command of the Federal Road Safety Corps, in a statement by its Sector Commander, Mrs Ngozi Ezeoma, on Monday, in Umuahia disclosed that the crash involved a trailer carrying chippings which hit and fell on a Sharon Volkswagen vehicle with 10 persons on board.

According to the FRSC, “At the time of the crash, eight persons had died including a woman standing by the roadside while three others were injured

Map of Abia State

“The injured victims were taken to the hospital while the dead ones were deposited at the morgue,” she said.

Ezeoma said a preliminary investigation revealed that the crash was caused by dangerous driving and excessive speeding.

In an interview with our correspondent earlier on Sunday, the President General of the Ebem Ohafia Development Union, where the bridge is located, Chief Emeka Mba, described the day as a “black Sunday”, adding, “Well, today should be regarded as a black Sunday because of the killings. As I speak, many people are still trapped under the truck.

“I learnt that one of the survivors is a lady with her two children sitting in front of the bus. But several others are still under the vehicle, and it’s a very helpless situation,” he said.

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Mba lamented the lack of emergency response equipment to move the heavy-duty truck, saying, “We have tried everything. We could not get any equipment to lift the truck and rescue the people underneath. It’s a very ugly situation,” he explained.

When asked about the condition of the road, Mba highlighted the poor state of the area and blamed the tragedy on the government’s negligence. He said, “That section of the road is very low, and we’ve done a lot of press statements and documentation to draw the government’s attention to it. This is a small road and heavy-duty trucks should be restricted until proper measures are put in place,” he added.

The Abia State Road Traffic and Safety Management Agency, in a statement by the Public Relations Department, A. Nelson, said, “A trailer loaded with chippings collided with a Sienna bus carrying nine passengers, resulting in a devastating loss of lives and multiple injuries.”

He stated that the state traffic management officials, led by the General Manager, Col. Ezichi Kalu (retd.), promptly responded to the distress call and arrived at the scene to provide critical intervention adding that the team mobilised resources, including a crane and two towing vans, to rescue victims and manage the situation.

“While we mourn the unfortunate loss of lives. We are pleased to announce that the road has been fully cleared and reopened to traffic. Motorists are strongly advised to drive cautiously and adhere to traffic regulations to prevent such tragic incidents in the future.

“ARTSMA remains steadfast in its commitment to ensuring the safety and efficiency of Abia State’s roadways. This incident highlights the critical need for collective responsibility in upholding road safety guidelines.”

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