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At least nine people were feared dead on Wednesday evening following a fire outbreak at a filling station located on Sokoto Road, Zaria, Kaduna State.

An eyewitness at the scene, Malam Musa Musa, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that the fire started when a petrol tanker was off-loading fuel at the station late in the evening.

He said: "the tanker went up in flames while off-loading. All efforts by people around the area to put off the fire before it escalated yielded no desired result.

"Some of the rescuers suggested that the only option was to drive the tanker out of the filling station to avoid extensive losses.

"In the process of driving the tanker out of the station, a commercial bus filled with passengers ran into the tanker and burst into flames," Musa said.

An official of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), who participated in the rescue operation, confirmed that all but one of the passengers on board the bus perished.

He, whoever, pleaded not to be named.

"We did our best to rescue the passengers but there was no way as only one life was saved and he has been taken to Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital, Shika, for medical attention," the official said.

NAN reports that the rescue operation involved firemen, the police, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps officials and Islamic First Aid Groups.



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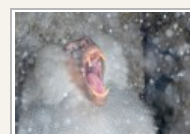
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