

From **Rose Ejembi,**
Makurdi and Bamigbola
Gbolagunte, Akure

It was anguish and tears yesterday as scores of persons were killed in road crashes in Benue and Ondo states.

While the case in Benue involved a fuel tanker which exploded, killed several persons and razed many houses, shops and vehicles in Oshigbodu community, Agatu Local Government Area, that of Ondo involved an 18-seater bus which plunged into a river.

A witness said the accident occurred when a truck loaded with petroleum products fell at Oshigbodu-Obagaji junction, spilled its content, while the flames spread to a nearby filling station along Qweto axis and consumed everything along its path. Most residents, however, blamed the number of casualties on the absence of fire fighters to quell the fire.

"The tanker fell at a junction in Oshigbodu and while the contents gushed out, spread to a filling station where it exploded. I am so sad right now because this is indeed a black Sunday for us. This unfortunate incident has destroyed major parts of Oshigbodu community. The situation is tensed right now, we cannot ascertain the number of lives lost, but I can confirm that some people were trapped in the inferno," said the source who identified himself as Odeh.

Corps Commander of Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Yakubu Mohammed said 12 bodies, including eight males, three females and one child had

been recovered from the scene of the accident.

Vice Chairman of Agatu Local Government, John Ikwulono, who confirmed the incident, said it was possible more lives might have been lost.

"At the moment, we cannot ascertain the number of deaths. People who were not able to escape got burnt. The inferno is still on, I can tell you that it is a very terrible thing, especially as we are finding it difficult to get fire service to the area. When we contacted the fire service station in Otukpo, they said their vehicle had broken down," he said.

Ikwulono lamented the absence of fire service in Agatu saying the only one in Benue South senatorial district is located in Otukpo, about one hour drive to Oshigbodu. He said the people resorted to use of manual efforts to put out the fire.

He called on the State Emergency and Maintenance Agency (SEMA) as well as National Emergency and Maintenance Agency (NEMA) to come to the aid of victims.

Fire Service Director in charge of Benue, Donald Ikyaa said he just received the report of the fire incident in Agatu.

"Oshodi is far from Makurdi and only Otukpo can connect the place. The state does not have a substation in Otukpo. The one there is Federal Government-owned," he said.

Casualty were also recorded in the other accident involving an 18 seater bus, which plunged into Qwena River along Akure-Ondo road in Ondo State.

The accident caused traf-

Black Sunday in Benue, Ondo

• Scores feared dead as tanker explodes • 18 seater bus plunges into Ondo river

fic logjam on the road as efforts were made to remove the vehicle from the river.

A witness said driver of the bus was on his way from Ondo end heading towards

Akure when he lost control and slipped into the river.

"Five of the passengers, including a child have been rescued and rushed to the hospital by motorists and

men of the Federal Roads Safety Corps (FRSC) while some of the passengers lost their lives," said the source.

As at the time of filing this report, Daily Sun

could not ascertain the number of casualties. However, some bodies were sighted inside the river and around the scene of the incident.



Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha (middle), inspecting some of the houses destroyed by Boko Haram insurgent at Kwapre Village in Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa, yesterday. With him are District Head of Dugwaba, Chief Simon Yakubu (2nd left); Manager of Humanitarian Affairs, North East Development Commission (NEDC), Musa Zarami (left) and others.

PDP govs tackle APC over Obaseki

From **Ndubuisi Orji,**
Abuja

THE Peoples Democratic Party Governors Forum, yesterday, accused their All Progressives Congress (APC) counterparts under the Progressive Governors forum (PGF) of being partisan in their response to Governor Godwin Obaseki's claim.

The Edo governor had claimed that the Federal Government printed N60 billion to support states' allocations in March.

The forum, in a statement by its Director General, Cyril Maduabum, said it was alarmed by the partisan slant the admonition to the Federal Government on its monetary policies has

assumed.

On Friday, the APC governors claimed Obaseki statement did not reflect the true state of things, describing his statement as unfortunate and inaccurate.

"As a trained economist who has been a governor since 2016, Mr. Obaseki is aware of all the support states have received from President Buhari in coping with the challenges of the

talks in a measured way. His advise, which by the way has been corroborated by none other than the governor of the CBN himself, and the international ratings agency FITCH, should be heeded rather than being crucified for sounding a note of caution.

"No doubt the Federal Government has been supporting the states in the