

Black Saturday: 2 die, 35 vehicles burnt as tanker explodes on Lagos-Ibadan Expressway

•FRSC says hoodlums prevented rescuers reaching accident scene

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A fuel laden tanker yesterday exploded at the Kara end of the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, killing the driver and the motor boy.

Thirty-five vehicles, including those parked on the highway were also burnt. Although the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) in a release said only 29 vehicles were burnt.

The Public Relations Officer of the Ogun State Compliance and Enforcement Corps (TRACE), Babatunde Akinbiyi, who confirmed the accident to *Sunday Telegraph*, explained that the accident occurred in the early hours of Saturday.

Although, Akinbiyi said the cause of the accident could not be immediately ascertained, but averred that the accident could be as a result of over speeding on the part of the tanker driver.

Akinbiyi said: "Our men are still on rescue mission, the tanker was loaded with diesel, may be the driver was speeding or sleeping while driving, along the line, the tanker fell on its side and it started spilling its content.

"About 35 vehicles were burnt particularly those parked by the sides of the road, the driver and the motor boy died. We cannot say anything about other casualties now, I will keep you posted," he said.

Akinbiyi said that the deceased had been deposited at the morgue of Olabisi Onabanjo University Teaching Hospital (OOUTH), Sagamu.

However, the Corps Marshal, FRSC, Dr.



Boboye Oyeyemi in a statement issued by the Corps Public Education Officer (CPEO) Assistant Corps Marshal (ACM), Mr Bisi Kazeem, on Saturday in Abuja, described as unfortunate, but avoidable, the fatal crash that occurred at Kara Bridge.

He stated that frantic efforts were being made to curtail tanker explosions, pointing out that the crash investigation by FRSC personnel deployed for the rescue operation, revealed that the driver lost control of the vehicle as a result of a tyre pull-out which caused the tanker to skid on the expressway in a wild inferno.

"From the crash investigation report submitted, a total of 2 male adults were killed and burnt beyond recognition. Destruction of properties caused by the fire also left

29 vehicles, parked by the road side, burnt down completely," he said.

Oyeyemi lamented the actions of hoodlums who prevented the combined rescue teams of the Fire Service and the FRSC from approaching the scene of the crash.

"When our personnel got to the scene, they met teams of the Lagos State Fire Service who advised our men against approaching the scene of the crash.

"The fire fighters said they were equally deployed to the scene for the same reason, but on arrival they were chased away by some hoodlums, carrying dangerous weapons. Both

teams had to run to the Isheri Division of the Nigeria Police for cover," he said.

The Corps Marshal said that the Corps was seriously engaging critical stakeholders to find a lasting solution to tanker explosions on the roads, including enforcing the use of safety valves to prevent spillage after falls by tankers.

He called on governments at all levels to expedite action towards working out modalities that would support and hasten existing efforts on fleet renewal as most of the articulated vehicles on our roads were aged.

"Avoid speeding, road rage and driving against the flow of traffic as FRSC wishes you safe journey to our various destinations," he said.