

2 Tanker drivers block Lokoja-Abuja Highway over death of colleague

Muhammad Bashir

LOKOJA

The Abuja-Lokoja highway was on Monday night blocked by angry tanker drivers who were protesting the death of one of their colleagues who ran into a ditch after allegedly refusing to stop at a military checkpoint close to Murtala Mohammed Bridge, Jamata in Kogi State.

The blockage was said to have started Monday night.

Sources claimed that the tanker driver refused to stop when flagged down at the military checkpoint and was chased by the security personnel.

The driver was said to have stopped his vehicle on noticing that he was being chased, attempted to run into the bush, but fell into a ditch and was seriously injured.

He was rushed to the hospital for medical attention but later died. His death was said to have annoyed other tanker drivers who later blocked the Abuja-Lokoja Highway.

But the Kogi State police command spokesman, SP William Aya said he had no information as to whether or not the driver died.

"It's true that the driver fell into a ditch and was taken to the hospital, but I can't say if he later died, I will find out and get back to you," he said.

Meanwhile, the governor of Kogi State, Alhaji Yahaya Bello yesterday ordered the immediate reopening of the Abuja-Lokoja-Lagos Highway blocked by tanker drivers since Monday.

Bello gave the order in Lokoja through his Special Adviser on Security Matters, Mr Omodara Jerry. The governor expressed sadness over the death of the driver, but condemned the action of the tanker drivers' union, saying there were better ways of channeling

their grievances.

He said the Abuja-Lokoja-Lagos highway is a critical road and its continued blockade was detrimental to businesses and the lives of the people.

"The Guards Commander and his men are already on their way to ensure fruitful dialogue with the aggrieved tanker drivers for the possible reopening of the highway. "This blockade has affected businesses of Nigerians and might endanger some people with critical health issues. Imagine if an expectant mother falls into labour in the resultant gridlock. "Blocking the highway is not the best way to handle issues."

Ambush: Security bandits exchange

Baba Negedu,

KADUNA

The Kaduna State Police command has said security operatives in the state had engaged bandits that laid ambush to kidnap citizens.

The gun duel took place around Udawa along the Kaduna - Birnin Gwari road, when operatives of the state Police Command attached to Buruku Division while on routine patrol ran into an ambush by the bandits.

ASP Muhammed Jalige, spokesman of the command said, the security men ran into an ambush by the suspected bandits who were in their desperate mission to perpetrate violent crime against the unsuspecting commuters.

Jalige said, "The incident happened close to Masallaci village along the Birnin Gwari