

Road Accident Claims 24 in Abia

The poor condition of federal roads in the Southeast has continued to claim lives as 24 persons died at the weekend in a ghastly motor accident. The accident involved a 14-wheel Mack truck and a Mercedes 608 bus conveying people to Aba after a wedding party at Isuikwuato.

THISDAY gathered that the

*From Emmanuel Ugwu
in Umuahia*

accident occurred late in the evening of Saturday along the stretch of road between Abia Tower and Ohia junction along Umuahia - Aba Express road. It happened at a portion where motorists have been forced into

one lane of the express way following the bad condition of the other lane.

Public Relations Officer of the Federal Medical Centre, Umuahia, Ms Owanja Ndidi Chioma, said that 20 bodies were brought to the hospital while 18 were brought in with various degrees of wounds. He added that four persons later died bringing the number of the dead to 24.

She said that 13 persons were still receiving treatment at the casualty ward of the FMC with doctors working round the clock to save them.

The victims were mostly women and members of Jehovah's Witnesses from Aba who went to Isuikwuato to attend a traditional marriage ceremony involving one of their members.

Head of operations of FRSC Abia state command, Mr. Augustine Agbunno, told our cor-

respondent that the two vehicles had a head on collision while moving in opposite direction on the one lane of the express road.

He said that though the exact cause of the accident has not been established it was likely the bus driver was engaging in "dangerous overtaking" and crashed the vehicle into an oncoming heavy duty truck.

Agbunno said that the driver of the truck with registration number Abia XD 198 UMA disappeared into thin air after the accident but our correspondent gathered that the driver of the bus marked Lagos AV 753 SMK, was among the dead.

When our correspondent visited the scene of the accident the sign of the calamity was still visible as personal items such wrapper, wig, foot wears and Cray fish littered the scene.

d to Release Bapetel's Property

*From Matthew Onah
in Yola*

EFCC that the release should be done unconditionally and immediately.

He ruled that EFCC's continuous holding on to Bapetel's property after a court of competent jurisdiction had earlier ordered it to free the seized property amounted to gross abuse of the rule of law.

He maintained that it was illegal and unreasonable for the authority of EFCC to return to the same court seeking a stay of execution on a case the agency (EFCC) disregarded.

Justice Umar pointed out that to grant the EFCC's request will amount to reversing the ruling of the court on the 6th July, 2007, which ordered the EFCC to return all the property seized from the Respondent (Bapetel).