

# Tragedy as Lorry Crushes 3

Three persons, including a yet-to-be identified woman, were weekend, crushed to death at Akaeze end of the newly constructed Afikpo-Okigwe expressway, in Ebonyi State.

The tragedy occurred as Ebonyi State Command of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) said it had impounded at least 134 motorcycles from January 1 to date, over failure to comply with the commission's directive that motorcycle riders must wear crash helmets.

The accident, which involved a salon car heading towards Afikpo, and a 911 lorry, which was heading towards Okigwe, occurred at about 6.30pm. The car was completely smashed, killing all the three occupants.

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*From Christopher Isiguzo*

*in Abakaliki*

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Though eyewitness account had it that the accident allegedly occurred as a result of reckless driving of the 911 driver, officials of the FRSC said it happened when the saloon car driver lost control and in a bid to negotiate the bend close to the scene of the accident, ran into the oncoming lorry.

Sector Commander of the FRSC, Mr Emma Abe, told THISDAY in a telephone interview that: "the driver of the salon car lost control of his car and ran into the lorry. We have been enlightening people on the dangers of over speeding, but unfortunately, a lot of people are not ready to comply.

Perhaps, if the saloon car

driver had reduced his speed, who knows, the accident may not have happened.

"When THISDAY visited the scene of the incident barely 10 minutes after it occurred, sympathisers were seen hanging around the place, while the remains of the deceased were said to have been taken to Afikpo, by operatives of the FRSC. Driver of the 911 was not at the scene, as he was said to have taken to his heels. Some policemen at the scene said he reported to the nearby police station where he is presently kept to avoid being lynched.

Meanwhile, FRSC in Ebonyi State said it had impounded no fewer than 134 motorcycles since January 1, when it became mandatory for motorcycle operators to wear crash helmets, noting however, that the state had recorded about 90 per cent compliance since last weekend.

Abe told THISDAY that the command had set up a Task Force headed by Head, Public Affairs of the FRSC in the state, Mr Egwu, with membership drawn from the police, civil defence and the FRSC, to monitor the level of compliance.

Abe said an enlightenment programme was mounted by the commission prior to the effective date, and expressed the hope that the crash helmet introduction would go a long way in reducing carnage on the roads.

## Seeks Prayer for Peace

said though Nigeria at 48 is not yet the nation of our collective dream, a land of illimitable opportunities and egalitarianism as it should be, "we must not lose hope of the better days ahead despite the poor state of our economy."

He added that Nigerians of all faith must unite to make Nigeria the global giant of Africa that it was destined to be.

"Nigeria has every ingredient for greatness; with our ardent posture, assertive

nature, and tenacity of purpose matched with stupendous natural resources, immense success is attainable," he said.

He also saluted the people of Osun State for what he called "their courage, candour, and perseverance in the face of persecution, hounding, and gangsterism," as he urged them to keep their hopes alive, saying "by the grace of the Almighty and a renewed faith in forthright judiciary, the will of the people will surely triumph."