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## Trailer Crushes 5 to Death in Lagos

By Eugene Agha and Adewole Ajao, 09.27.2009

Tragedy struck yesterday when a trailer filled with Dangote sugar crushed five bystanders to death and seriously injured five others at the popular Cele Bus Stop about 10.20am.

According to eye witness reports, the trailer was on its way to Oshodi when it hit an oblivious okada rider and dragged him from his stationery position along with other pedestrians before stopping in front of the Cele police station.

Upon discovering his dilemma, the driver of the trailer with plate number XC 482 KJ, fled into the police premises to report his dastardly act. He was later whisked away from the station dressed in a police uniform, to avoid being lynched. The crowd turned the vehicle on its side to rescue some of those trapped under it.

They later torched it and its load of sugar upon discovering the disappearance of the driver. This act was quelled by the police who dispersed the crowd and later quenched an inferno which completely consumed the passenger section of the trailer and part of the sugar consignment.

As at the time THISDAY arrived the scene, a team of Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) and Lagos State Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) officials were already on hand to control the situation.

The remaining signs of the tragedy were the partly burnt trailer, blood, human brains and items belonging to the affected people. The tragedy was attributed to brake failure but a vendor who spoke on a condition of anonymity said such tragedies were synonymous with the area and Dangote trucks who deliberately ran into pedestrians for unknown reasons.

"It is not the first time their truck has done such," he recalled. "The first incident was around 1997 and since then, no year goes by without their truck killing people here."

Members of the police were not too disposed to revealing much information but an officer of the Cele Police Station disclosed that the force Public Relations Head was around at the time of the calamity and that he was in the best position to talk about the issue. Casualties and the dead were later evacuated to nearby hospitals while a trailer with license plate XH 355 GGE was on ground to remove the untouched bales of sugar around 1.30pm.

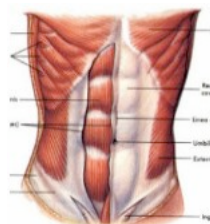
The Lagos State Police Spokesman, Mr. Frank Mba who confirmed the report to THISDAY on phone, put the number of those who died at five. Mba, a Superintendent of Police further stated that the five injured persons are being treated at various hospitals in Lagos, while the bodies of the deceased persons, four male and one female have since been deposited at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), Idiaraba.

"Today, at about 10.30am, a MAC Trailer, fully loaded with sugar heading from Apapa towards Oshodi allegedly suffered a break failure, lost control and eventually, ran into a group of commuters at Cele Bus Stop. Five persons, four male and one female died on the spot while five others who sustained injuries were rushed to hospital" he added. Mba gave the name of the driver as Awulu Garba and that he had since been arrested and helping the police in its course of investigation.

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