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## 60 passengers escape death, as driver collapses, dies on way to Lagos....Vanguard reporter, assistant driver steer vehicle to safety

By Emmanuel Ulayi

Posted to the Web: Tuesday, June 05, 2007

ABUJA—NO fewer than 60 passengers, including a Vanguard reporter, who boarded a luxury bus, Sunday, narrowly escaped death as the driver conveying them from Abuja to Lagos collapsed and died on the wheel in Akure. The driver was taken to a hospital where he was confirmed dead.

The incident caused a stir among the passengers who were confused on whether to continue the journey or not.

Disturbed by the strange development, some passengers abandoned the vehicle for other alternatives.

One of the passengers who sat by the driver, had noticed that the driver was gradually drifting away from the wheel only to see him (driver) collapse.

This reporter who was in the vehicle struggled with the assistant driver to rescue the vehicle, which was getting off the road. They did everything to steer the vehicle to safety.

Soon after the death of the driver, who was known as "Father Francis", the assistant driver had to make an urgent call to the head office of the transport company in Lagos and was advised to bring the corpse in the bus to Lagos.

Worried by the response of the company, the passengers agreed to contribute some money to hire an ambulance to convey the remains of the deceased as a sign of respect, a gesture the assistant driver said he could not accept as it was against the directive given him from his office.

Faced with the dilemma, the passengers had to reach a consensus by

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accepting to allow the corpse in the vehicle to Lagos, while complaining bitterly that the company had not acted responsibly in the handling of the matter and vowed never to patronise them again.

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