

9 youth corps members, 39 others roasted to death in auto accidents

GUSAU — A TOTAL of forty-eight people lost their lives yesterday in two separate auto accidents as the week closed. Thirty persons were burnt to death, among them nine youth corps members serving in Zamfara State in a motor accident around the NNPC depot on Gusau-Sokoto road, while another 18 passengers lost their lives and two sustained serious injuries in another accident which occurred at Darhi village, Dutsinma Local Government area of Katsina State.

The Gusau mishap, which occurred around 1.30 p.m. yesterday involved a Peugeot J5 bus and an 18-seater Toyota bus.

An eyewitness told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that the accident followed a collision when one of the drivers swerved in an attempt to avoid a stray animal.

"Few seconds after the accident, the J5 burst into flames and killed all on board," the witness said. At the scene of the accident, officers of FRSC were seen trying to remove the bodies from the wreckage.

Speaking to newsmen, leader of the rescue team of National Security and Civil Defence Corps, Mr. Akubuiroh Chika, a deputy commandant, said nine identity cards of NYSC members serving in the state were recovered and that two other national identity cards were also recovered. He lamented, amid sobs, that the roasted passengers included 20 female and 10 male with three others being burnt beyond recognition. "We are able to rescue alive, three female and

six male, mostly children," he said.

The deputy commandant added that over N63, 000 was recovered, "But out of it, N61, 000 was slightly burnt while N3, 410 was recovered intact."

"It is a very unfortunate incident and I believe it would not have happened if drivers were only a bit more careful," Alhaji Umar Liman, the state FRSC Sector Commander said.

On the Dutsinma, Katsina motor accident, witnesses said the mishap occurred Thursday.

It was gathered that the accident occurred at about 10 p.m. when a truck with registration number XA 828 FSK collided head-on with a bus, registration number XC 862 GUS. The witness said that the accident occurred when the front tyre of the truck, conveying bags of beans from Dankama town in the state to Sheme village (also in the state), got burst.

The driver of the truck lost control and hit the oncoming bus. The bus somersaulted and caught fire which burnt all the 15 passengers on board while five other passengers in the truck sustained injuries.

The injured persons were rushed to the general hospital at Dutsinma, where three of them later died while the remaining two passengers were receiving treatment. The remains of the deceased have since been deposited at the hospital mortuary.

The Medical Director of the hospital, Dr Yusuf Oladeji, confirmed the death of the passengers. The police in Dutsinma also confirmed the story but declined comment.