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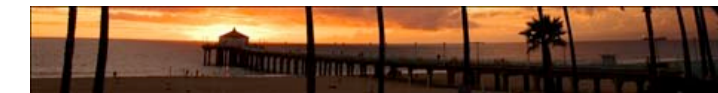
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VANGUARD

Nigeria: Seven Die in Anambra Auto-Crashes

Vincent Umuadu

19 May 2010

Seven Persons, Including a Mobile Police Officer, a Three — Seven Persons, Including a Mobile Police Officer, a Three month- old baby, its parents and a family friend, were feared dead in an accident involving four vehicles at a police checkpoint in Awka, Anambra State, Monday night.

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An eye-witness told Vanguard that a DAF truck with number-plate XN 754 LSR, carrying a 40-feet container, lost its breaks at a slope on the busy Unizik Junction and rammed into some vehicles at the police checkpoint.

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It knocked four of the vehicles off the road into the nearby valley, leading to the instant death of the people. The driver of the truck also died on the spot.

Several others who sustained injuries were taken to the nearby Regina Caeli Hospital for

treatment.

Other vehicles involved in the accident were a Toyota Hilux van with registration number AN 33 A 03 belonging to the state Ministry of Works, a Peugeot 504 salon car with registration number ANSG 43 and Nissan Sunny car with registration number BB 589 APP.

As soon as the accident happened, sympathizers dismantled the drums used by the police to block part of the expressway, which made the policemen at the scene to run away. The Divisional Police Officer, DPO, for Awka Central Police Station, Mr. Owan Ketung and his colleague from the 'B' Division, Mr. Temitope Fasugba, who rushed to the scene to assess the situation were almost mobbed by the sympathizers and had to quietly leave the scene.

The protesters also marched to the police headquarters, demanding the immediate dismantling all check points in the heart of the city, arguing that the policemen use them only for collecting money from motorists.

The state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Philemon Leha, who reacted on the accident, sympathized with the people, but argued that the police should not be blamed for the accident because their presence was for the good of the state.

According to him, the increased number of check points in the city was to check the activities of armed robbers and kidnappers, adding that if the check point were dismantled, "the kidnappers can even come and carry me from this place."

The state Governor, Mr. Peter Obi also visited the scene of the accident yesterday and commiserated with the families who lost their dear ones.

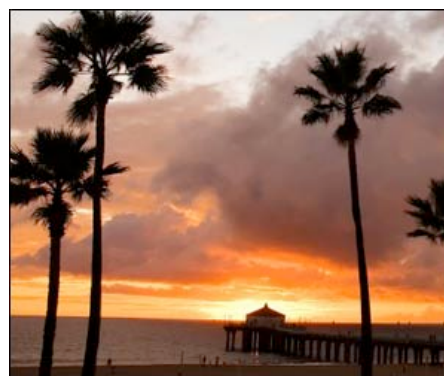
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