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Over 100 people perish on Benin-Ore, Onitsha roads

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No fewer than 100 people were killed in two separate road accidents which occurred in Okija, along Owerri-Onitsha Highway in Anambra State and Ofosu, the boundary town between Edo and Ondo States yesterday.

By CHRIS OCHAYI, VINCENT UJUMADU, OKEY NDIRIBE & GABRIEL ENOGHOLASE

No fewer than 100 people were killed in two separate road accidents which occurred in Okija, along Owerri-Onitsha Highway in Anambra State and Ofosu, the boundary town between Edo and Ondo States yesterday.

About 80 persons were reportedly burnt to death in the accident involving a haulage truck, a petrol tanker and the Young Shall Grow double-decker bus at Ugbogui Village, near Ofosu at about 1.30pm just as 20 other passengers who were travelling in two commercial buses owned by the Rivers State Transport Company, RTC, reportedly died at Okija, when another haulage truck rammed onto them in the early hours of the day.

Sources said that the accident occurred as the Young Shall Grow bus and the haulage truck were struggling over which vehicle had the right of way and the petrol tanker which was fully loaded with petrol rammed into the two vehicles and burst into a huge ball of flame. The victims were burnt beyond recognition even as the accident led to traffic gridlock that lasted for over three hours.

An official of the Federal Road Safety Commission, FRSC, who spoke on condition of anonymity confirmed the incident at press time saying that only three of the passengers were rescued from the fully loaded luxury bus pointing out that the mangled bodies of the victims littered the scene.



(<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/04/over-100-people-perish-on-benin-ore-onitsha-roads/benin-ore-road1/>)

Scene of the accident involving a luxury bus, trailer and tanker at Ugbogui Village along Benin-Ore Express road

According to the eye witness, the victims of the Ore- Benin accident included drivers of the vehicles and their conductors (motor-boys) and 53 passengers in the Luxury bus.

Another source at the scene however said that the multiple accident occurred when the haulage vehicle which had a flat tyre rammed into the tanker which also swerved and rammed onto the double-decker Luxury bus, causing the petrol tanker to explode and burst into flame that consumed all those around the area.

FRSC confirmed 36 dead in Ore-Benin road crash

Also preliminary reports from the FRSC stated that 36 persons dead in the Ore-Benin road crash and that the accident occurred when a tyre from the Dangote truck suddenly pulled out and rammed into the tanker which caught fire immediately.

The Luxury bus which was on speed, lost control and ran into the blazing fire, consuming its occupants.

However, an FRSC team was on hand to rescue 3 passengers while 30 others died from the Luxury bus.

The Tanker driver with his conductor, in addition to the Truck driver and his conductor were also confirmed dead. Two children were also consumed by the fire which spread to a nearby mechanic workshop, burning 8 additional vehicles resulting to a heavy traffic gridlock.

Meanwhile, a detachment of the FRSC, Police and the Construction Company were at the scene for intensive traffic control and diversion of route to ensure seamless traffic flow along the corridor.

The Corps advises road users on Benin road to take Oluku junction – Ifon-Owo-Akure road to Lagos while vehicles from Lagos are advised to take Akure – Owo road .

The FRSC also contacted the Young Shall Grow transport company and has a scanned copy of its manifest which confirms that 30 persons boarded the bus earlier in the day from the Jibowu terminus to Enugu.

Disturbed by the recent spate of road crash fatalities linked to speeding and reckless driving, the Federal Road Safety Corps has decided to evoke its statutory powers to institute legal actions against drivers and transport operators whose vehicles are responsible for such crashes.

Part of this arrangement includes the Corps' resolve to assist victims and relations of road crash victims to seek compensation from such fleet operators.

At Okija in Anambra State, an eye witness told Saturday Vanguard that a trailer had rammed onto the oncoming vehicles, including two buses belonging to the RTC, killing most of the occupants of the two buses instantly.

The accident caused an excruciating traffic jam on both lanes. For several hours, commuters were at stand still as movement was virtually impossible.

However, there was a little respite on the expressway after about two hours as vehicles coming from the Onitsha end had to divert at Okija junction, while those coming from the Owerri end diverted at Ezego junction at Ihiala.

Mangled bodies of the victims were scattered along the road, while those wounded were taken to nearby hospitals for treatment.

Men of the Federal Road Safety Corps, FRSC, and the police, as well as other volunteers were at the scene of the accident clearing the blocked road.

It was not clear what caused the accident, but an eye witness said that the trailer driver might have lost control on the sloppy road and subsequently rammed onto other vehicles.

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