



Nigeria: Valentine's Day Tragedy - 27 Killed - Man, Pregnant Wife Roasted - Politician Shot Dead

BY TONY EDIKE, PETER DURU AND DEMOLA AKINYEMI, 16 FEBRUARY 2014

The deaths, on Friday, include the 27 killed in an auto crash in Oji River, Enugu; a man and wife roasted in Benue State and a politician allegedly shot dead by a drunken policeman in Oro, Kwara State.

The Oji River incident occurred when a truck carrying stones skidded off the road and crashed into a market, killing at least 27 persons.

Some primary school students, said to be returning from school at the time of the incident, were, reportedly, among the victims.

Scores of traders, including motorcycle riders, sustained various degrees of injuries as a result of the accident, which occurred at the popular Oji River Wonderful Market on a day Nigerians were marking Valentine's Day.

The truck, descending a hill from the Enugu end of the road, according to eye witnesses, skidded off the road after a brake failure and rammed into vehicles and motorcycles.

At least, ten motorcycles and four vehicles were damaged beyond repairs while several shops were also hit.

When Sunday Vanguard visited the scene of the accident, yesterday, an operation was in progress to remove corpses under the rubbles of shops pulled down by the truck.

Most of the victims were operators of boutiques, medicine stores and provision shops by the roadside.

The police, officials of the Federal Road Safety Commission and Civil Defense Corps, who were part of the operation, described the crash as fatal.

Eyewitnesses said those who sustained injuries were taken to the Oji River General Hospital while those with critical cases were rushed to National Orthopaedic Hospital, Enugu.

Chairman of the Market Association, Mr Augustine Mba, described the development as "tragic", stressing that it was "a dark day in the history of the market".

"This is sad. I was here in my shop when I heard the bang and rushed to discover that it was an accident which claimed many lives. There are Okada people, there are traders, there are passers -by among other victims. Goods destroyed are worth several millions of naira. I don't know the number of persons that died but it is not below eight. This is not the first time this kind of incident is taking place here. Two years ago, we witnessed a similar incident where various traders were killed", he said.

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Nigeria

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