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## 20 feared dead in Enugu auto crash

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By Vincent Ujumadu, Nwabueze Okonkwo, Francis Igata & Chimaobi Nwaiwu

ENUGU—No fewer than 20 persons were Wednesday feared dead in an auto crash that occurred along 9th Mile-Nsukka expressway, Enugu State, while several others sustained severe injuries.

This came on a day the Vice President, Professor Yemi Osinbajo, visited the scene of the petrol tanker accident in Onitsha that claimed 70 lives, declaring that the life of every Nigerian citizen mattered to the Federal Government, irrespective of status or where he resides.

The accident in Enugu occurred at about 6.15 pm, a few metres away from an alcoholic beverage company, situated at 9th Mile Corner.

An eyewitness account revealed that a heavy duty truck suffered brake failure and rammed into two commercial buses filled with passengers.

The accident came barely three days after a tanker laden with 33,000 litres of fuel suffered brake failure and rammed into a motor park at Upper Iweka, Onitsha, killing 69 persons.

The source further revealed that most of the passengers were suspected students of the University of Nigeria, Enugu campus, returning to their various destinations, following the closure of the institution over one month power outage.

However, police spokesperson, Mr. Ebere Amaraizu, in a statement, revealed that three persons died on the spot, while others who sustained severe injuries were rushed to the hospital.

The statement read: "The auto crash involved a diesel truck with registration number AWKk 311 XB, believed to have lost control as a result of suspected brake failure, hit two buses with registration numbers UWN 406 XA and UWN 57 XA. The truck also hit a

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motorcycle before it ended up in a ditch.

"All the persons that were injured were rushed to Our Saviour Hospital, 9th Mile Corner, while the deceased have been deposited at the hospital's mortuary."

Meanwhile, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo said, yesterday, in Onitsha, Anambra State, that the life of every Nigerian was important to the Federal Government, irrespective of status and where he/she is resident.

He spoke after visiting the scene of the incident where about 70 people died, following an inferno caused by a tanker loaded with fuel.

Osinbajo, who was accompanied by his host, Chief Willie Obiano and the senator representing Anambra Central senatorial district, Dr. Chris Ngige, said President Muhammadu Buhari was very concerned and pained by the fuel tanker tragedy that he felt it was not enough to send a condolence message and asked him to come and commiserate with the people of Anambra State.

He said: "I came on the instruction of President Muhammadu Buhari, who was greatly disturbed by the unfortunate accident.

"He asked me to come and first commiserate with Governor Obiano and Anambra people. He was very concerned that he felt it was not enough to issue condolence message and so asked me to come and commiserate with the people.

"I have been taken round to see the heroic action of the hospital staff and those involved in the emergency. Unfortunately, many lost their lives, but some have seen today and are responding to treatment"

On arrival, Osinbajo visited nearby Toronto hospital where some of the patients of the accident were receiving treatment.

He told a large crowd that gathered around Asaba park, scene of the accident, that he had also been discussing with Governor Willie Obiano on possible ways of the Federal Government cooperating with the state to forestal further accidents.

He commended Governor Obiano for undertaking to settle the hospital bills of the victims.

While briefing the Vice President, Obiano gave the casualty figure as 42 dead and 17 injured.

He also said Anambra State government had banned long trucks and petrol tankers from plying the roads in Anambra during the day.

Obiano said the government had also banned heavy duty vehicles from plying state roads, adding that they often trans-load their contents on getting to state roads.

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