

# Petrol tanker kills 8 in Kogi; Benue Perm Sec, pregnant wife die in mysterious fire

●...as man stabs brother to death in Aba over MP3 player

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It was a gale of deaths across the country yesterday, from Lokoja to Makurdi and Lagos to Aba, as not less than 16 people died in a motor accident, fire and fight, while many sustained various degrees of injuries.

In Makurdi, the Benue State capital, an acting Permanent Secretary, in Benue State Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology, Mr. Seker Akaa, his pregnant wife, Linda, and two children, were yesterday morning killed in a mysterious fire that engulfed their private residence in the Quararafa Quarters area of Makurdi town.

Vanguard gathered from eyewitnesses that the inferno, which started at about 2:30a.m. in the residence of the Permanent Secretary and immediately spread to three other buildings in the quarters, was probably ignited by a surge in public power supply.

The inferno, which razed the private residence of the Senior Special Assistant to the Governor on Religion and Chaplain of Benue Government House, Evangelist Daniel Unongo, also consumed property worth millions of Naira.

According to the witness, "people in the neighbourhood were woken up by shouts of 'fire' from the house of the late Permanent Secretary.

"We all ran out of our houses to discover that Mr. Akaa's house was on fire and it was spreading to other adjoining buildings in the quarters.

"We also discovered that his pregnant wife and two children clung each other by the window crying for help, but efforts to pull down the entrance doors and windows were unsuccessful, while Mr. Akaa had already passed out somewhere in the house after inhaling much smoke.

"Unfortunately, when fire fighting personnel arrived the scene and the doors were successfully pulled down they had all been roasted and burnt beyond recognition.

"We are all saddened by this, but we thank God that their other two children, who are schooling in Gboko were not home. They would have also died in this mysterious fire."

Meanwhile, Governor Samuel Ortom has expressed sadness over the death of Mr. Akaa, describing it as a painful loss to the state government and Benue in general.

The governor, in a statement



The house where Mr. Akaa and family members were killed in a strange inferno (above and below).

by his Chief Press Secretary, Terver Akase, consoled the bereaved family, their friends and relations over the unfortunate incident.

The governor, who lamented that the state lost a prized asset in Mr. Akaa, consoled his friends and family members assuring that the government would take responsibility for their burial and also assist the other families who were affected to relocate.

Meanwhile, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Deputy Superintendent Catherine Anene, said the command had opened an investigation into the matter.

## 8 In Kogi

Eight persons were also confirmed dead in a ghastly accident that occurred in the early hours of yesterday in Lokoja, the Kogi State capital.

Seven others also sustained injuries in the accident that involved a petrol-laden truck, three cars, four tricycles, a bus and two motorcycles.

Vanguard gathered at the scene of the accident that the truck collided with the vehicles and Keke Napep, spilled its content on most of the vehicles, leading to fire outbreak.

Confirming the accident, the state Sector Commander of the Federal Road Safety Corps, FRSC, Emmanuel Abe, said: "The accident occurred around 8:50a.m. (yesterday), involving a white-coloured petrol-laden tanker with number plates JEG141XA DAF, which ran into four tricycles (Keke Napep), two motorcycles, three cars and a bus.

"Seventeen persons were involved. Eight died while seven others had been taken



to Federal Medical Centre and Specialist Hospital, Lokoja."

However, men of the Fire Service were able to reach the scene to put out the fire before it could do more damages.

## Okada accidents

A Sport Utility Vehicle, SUV, also yesterday, crushed to death a commercial motorcyclist and his passenger on the long bridge, Lagos-Ogun States border along Lagos-Ibadan Expressway.

Also, an unknown passenger reportedly slumped and died when he fell from a bike, while trying to navigate through the gridlock on same bridge of the road.

The victims were said to be on motorcycle facing a Hilux van riding against the flow of traffic, popularly called One-Way. The van, driven by a woman, crushed the passengers in a head-on collision.

The incidents aggravated traffic movement in the axis, as residents and motorists were stranded for several hours while some others simply made U-turn.

The ongoing construction work on the corridor also impeded the easy movement of traffic.

It was tales of woes, as those trapped in the traffic lamented their plights.

It was gathered that the gridlock started from the previous day, Sunday, caused by an accident involving a truck with unknown number and a Corolla car mid-afternoon.

The car, it was learned, got stuck under the truck crossing both lanes inward Berger on the Odo-Iya Alaro Bridge just after the diversion around Kara.

## Brother at war over MP3

Meanwhile, a man in his early 20s was reportedly stabbed to death by his brother over the ownership of a music player—MP3.

The suspect and victim are natives of Ibeme community in Obingwa Local Government Area of Abia State.

Vanguard gathered that the suspect, Gabriel Chimaeeze, had approached the victim, Kelechi Onyekachi, claiming the MP3 the deceased had belonged to him.

Onyekachi, who lived in the same house with Chimaeeze at 204 Ikot Ekpen Road, Ehene, Ogor Hill, was said to have resisted the suspect and a fight ensued.

Eyewitnesses said the



Scene of the accident at the Felele, Lokja-Abuja Expressway, yesterday. PHOTO: Boluwaji Obahopo.

suspect, a mechanic apprentice, stabbed the deceased, said to be the only son of his parents, who reside in Calabar, Cross River State, in the stomach with a sharp object.

The deceased, a welding apprentice, was said to have collapsed and died on the way to the hospital.

The suspect was immediately arrested by policemen from Ogor Hill Division, where he is being detained.

A roommate of the deceased, who simply gave his name as Promise Sunday, told Vanguard that before the incident, there was no love lost between the suspect and the deceased.

His words: "Before today's (yesterday's) incident, the two young men, who are brothers, always quarrelled, boasting of how one would kill the other, and in most times over a minor incidents.

"The one that took my roommate's life was over MP3. Onyekachi was having an MP3 (music player) and Chimaeeze approached him and said it was his and that he would take it back.

"The deceased resisted Chimaeeze's move, a fight ensued and the suspect reached for a sharp object and stabbed Onyekachi in the stomach. As we were taking him to hospital, he died on the way."

Contacted, Commissioner of Police, Abia State, Mr. Ene Okon, who confirmed the arrest of the suspect, added that he had ordered the Ogor Hill Police Division to transfer him to the State Criminal Investigation Department, SCID, Umuahia, for further investigation.