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TUESDAY 23 FEBRUARY

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HIGHWAYS OF DEATH: 41,257 killed in road accidents in 97 months

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*FRSC-operatives*

...Nation loses 15 persons per day, 4 persons every six hours

...How 204 persons were crushed in January 2021

By Clifford Ndujihe

THEY had been at home for 10 months on account of the closure of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They eagerly returned to school mid last month and were set to write their final examinations, graduate and join in the efforts to develop their father land.

This will no longer be for Samuel Adesomoju Tobi, a final year law student and Oluwasemire Ojinni, a final year Business Administration student of the Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba, Ondo State.

The duo were among 15 victims of an accident at the university gate on January 23. While Adesomoju was one time president of the Students union of the university, Oluwasemire was the first female president of the National Association of Business Administration and Management Students of AAUA.

Sadly, Oluwasemire died with her two siblings in the accident, a development that made their mum to slump and die on hearing the heart-rending news.

An articulated truck loaded with cement reportedly lost control due to brake failure and rammed into business centres and shops near the university gate killing no fewer than 15 persons with many sustaining injuries.

The AAUA accident is one of the 25 reported ghastly auto crashes of January 2021. The 15 deaths are among no fewer than 41,257 deaths recorded on our highways in 97 months, according to the Federal Road Safety Commission, FRSC, Nigeria Bureau of Statistics, NBS, and reported crashes tallied by Saturday Vanguard.

The figures excluded unreported cases and those who later died from injuries sustained from the crashes.

The death toll shows that every six hours, no fewer than four lives are lost on Nigerian roads. The daily toll is 15 persons and the monthly tally is 426 persons.

And every year, about 20,000 of the 11.854 million vehicles in the country are involved in accidents, Saturday Vanguard's investigations and analysis of data released by the National Bureau of Statistics, and the Federal Road Safety Commission have shown.

According to the NBS, the number of lives lost to road traffic accidents from January 2013 to 2019 are as follows: 2013 – 5,539; 2014 – 4,430; 2015 – 5,400; (FRSC): 2016 – 5,053; 2017 – 5,049; 2018 – 5,181; 2019 – 5,483.

Between January and March 2020, there were 1,758 deaths; April to June 2020, 855 deaths; and July to September 2020, 1,076 deaths.

The FRSC and NBS were yet to release the data for October to December, 2020 but Saturday Vanguard's tally of reported cases showed that no fewer than 1,229 auto crash deaths occurred. This means that 4,918 deaths were recorded in 2020.

Also, in January 2021, Saturday Vanguard's checks indicated that about 25 ghastly accidents that claimed no fewer than 204 lives took place across the country.

How Nigeria lost 28,195 lives to road crashes in 68 months

According to the FRSC, there were 12,077 road accidents of which 5,400 persons died in 2015. In 2016, the NBS said there were 11,363 crashes with 5,053 deaths; and in 2017, 10,026 crashes and 5,049 deaths. Broken down further, the 5,049 deaths of 2017 occurred as follows: First quarter, 1,466; second quarter, 1,207; third quarter, 1,070, and fourth quarter, 1,306 deaths. In the first quarter of 2018, the NBS said that 1,292 people died in 2,482 road accidents in Nigeria. Speed violation was reported as the major cause of road crashes in Q1 and it accounted for 50.81 per cent of the total road crashes reported. Tyre burst and dangerous driving followed closely, accounting for 8.26% and 8.42% respectively of the total road crashes recorded.

The second quarter 2018 road transport data released by the NBS, showed that road traffic accidents killed 1,331 Nigerians in 2608 crashes. Also, speed violation is reported as the major cause of road crashes in the second quarter of 2018 and it accounted for 50.65 per cent of the total road crashes reported. Also, tyre burst and dangerous driving followed closely as they both accounted for 8.59 per cent and 8.40 per cent of the total road crashes recorded.

Altogether, a total of 5,181 Nigerians lost their lives in road traffic crashes (RTC) in 2018, according to the FRSC.

The Full Year 2019 road transport data of the NBS reflected that 11,072 road crashes occurred in 2019. Speed violation is reported as the major cause of road crashes in 2019 and it accounted for 48% of the total road crashes reported, Wrongful overtaking followed closely as it accounted for 9% of the total road crashes recorded while Poor Weather recorded the least of the total road crashes reported.

A total of 35,981 Nigerians got injured in the road traffic crashes recorded. 33,831 of the 35,981 Nigerians that got injured, representing 94% of the figure, are adults while the remaining 2,150 Nigerians, representing 6% of the figure are children. 27,120 male Nigerians, representing 75%, got injured in road crashes in 2019 while 8,861 female Nigerians, representing 25% got injured.

Similarly, a total of 5,483 Nigerians got killed in the road traffic crashes recorded in 2019. 5,059 of the 5,483 Nigerians that got killed, representing 92% of the figure, are adults while the remaining 424 Nigerians, representing 8% of the figure are children. 4,255 male Nigerians, representing 78%, got killed in road crashes in 2019 while 1,228 female Nigerians, representing 22% got killed.

A total of 17,500 vehicles were involved in road traffic crashes in 2019. Car is reported to be the major type of vehicle involved in road crashes and it accounted for 31% of the vehicles involved in road crashes reported followed by Motorcycle and Minibus as they both accounted for 20% and 19% respectively. Data on the category of vehicles involved in road crashes in 2019 reflected that 64.68% of vehicles are commercial (11,319), 34.13% are private (5,972), 1.17% are government (204) and the diplomat with five vehicles involved.

This makes Nigeria one of the countries with very high road fatalities in the world. Indeed, in May 2017, the FRSC said that there were 33.7 deaths per 100,000 people in Nigeria every year, making Nigeria one of the countries with the highest number of fatalities in Africa. The FRSC Corps Marshal, Boboye Oyeyemi, made the disclosure during the flag-off of the Global Road Safety Week at the Nigeria Union of Journalists, NUJ, Secretariat, Kaduna. Zimbabwe has the worst road fatality in the world with 74.5 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants. The world average is 17.4; Africa is 26.6; and, according to the International Transport Forum, ITF, Road Safety Annual Report for 2018, the fatality rate for South Africa is 21 while Norway has the least road fatality with two deaths per 100,000 inhabitants.

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As of March 2018, the NBS put the number of registered vehicles in Nigeria at 11,653,871. With an estimated population of 200 million, the vehicle per population ratio is 0.06.

To reduce carnage on Nigerian roads, the FRSC, Public Education Officer, Bisi Kazeem, reportedly said that the FRSC had ensured full use of the services of the National Traffic Radio 107.1 FM, including its live stream on social media platforms to reach out to the motoring public.

He encouraged drivers to obey traffic laws and regulations and cooperate with traffic officers, as it was in their best interests and that of other road users.

The report said a total of 5,535 people got injured in the road traffic crashes recorded. This represents an average of 61 persons per day in three.

The NBS further said, “major causative factors of road crashes in the period under review are speed violation, wrongful overtaking, use of handsets while driving, dangerous overtaking and other factors”.

“Speed violation accounted for 47 per cent of the total road crashes reported,” the bureau said, adding that “wrongful overtaking followed closely as it accounted for 10 per cent of the total road crashes recorded, while dangerous overtaking recorded the least of the total road crashes reported”.

According to NBS, a total of 3,334 vehicles were involved in road traffic crashes in those months, with cars reported to be the major type of vehicle involved in road crashes.

“Cars accounted for 28 per cent of the vehicles involved in road crashes reported followed by motorcycle and minibus as they both accounted for 24 and 15 per cent respectively.”

FRSC spokesperson Bisi Kazeem said a total of 2,656 road crashes were reported between July and September, adding that the road police agency had not relented in its efforts at reducing carnage on the highways.

He attributed most of the road crashes and deaths that occurred along various routes in the country within the period to over-speeding.

Kazeem urged the motoring public to cooperate with the FRSC, saying that it would go a long way in preventing incessant crashes on the roads.

The spokesperson appealed to motorists to desist from buying used or fake tyres and opt for good ones to save lives and properties.

Kazeem encouraged drivers to obey traffic rules, regulations and cooperate with traffic officers, as it was in their best interests and that of other road users.

Deadly road accidents are frequently reported in Nigeria, often caused by overloading, bad condition of roads and reckless driving.

Timeline of accidents in January 2021

January 2: The Emir of Daura, Alhaji Umar Faruq's younger brother, Abdullah I Umar and two of his friends died in motor accident along Katsina-Daura road

January 2: Chief of protocol to Governor Rotimi Akeredolu of Ondo State, Tosin Ogunbodele and his driver died in an auto crash along Ilesa- Akure Road, Ondo State.

January 4: A truck driver killed a middle aged man on Owerri Road, Onitsha, Anambra State while the deceased was crossing the highway.

January 5: Six persons were confirmed dead while 9 others sustained injuries in an accident involving articulated vehicles and a Toyota bus around Car park C on

Lagos-Ibadan Express way

January 7: 22 persons lost their lives in accident involving a truck, a bus and a car in Apata, Lokoja, Kogi State. The FRSC said 26 persons were involved.

January 10: No fewer than 37 persons died in two accidents in Bauchi and Nasarawa. While 20 persons died in the Bauchi crash, a family of six was among the 17 that perished in Nasarawa. The Bauchi accident occurred at Tirwun village, a suburb along Bauchi-Maiduguri Expressway. The victims were burned beyond recognition.

January 12: 21 persons died while 14 others sustained injuries in two crashes in Niger and Oyo states. The Niger crash happened at Panti village, Bida on Mokwa Road. 13 people died, 14 sustained injuries. The Oyo accident occurred at Ibadan-Ife Expressway.

January 12: Eight people died in an accident at Celica area of Ibadan, Oyo State.

January 12: A young boy, Ayuba Raji, was crushed to death by a truck loaded with cattle at Challenge Junction, Ibadan.

January 14: No fewer than 29 lives were lost in two road accidents in Kogi and Borno states.

In Kogi, 14 persons including five children lost their lives in the accident on Anyingba-Ajaokuta Road. Nine were injured.

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