

## Tragedy in Jigawa: Petrol tanker explosion kills 147



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- By Henry Umoru, Demola Akinyemi, Johnbosco Agbakwuru, Obas Esiedesa & Mohammed Abubakar

**DUTSE—TRAGEDY** struck as a petrol tanker, yesterday, exploded at Majiya town, in Taura Local Government Area of Jigawa State, killing over 147 people, with others hospitalised.

The Taura LG Chairman, Shuaibu Hambali, who confirmed this to newsmen, also puts a number of persons who sustained degrees of injuries at 72.

The explosion occurred around 12:30am, when the driver of the tanker, travelling from Kano to Nguru, in Yobe State, lost control near Khadija University, Majiya. Eyewitnesses described the scene as that of chaos and despair, with many struggling to rescue the injured, amidst the flames.

**People were running in all directions, screaming for help —Eyewitness**

A resident, Sani Umar, who narrowly escaped the inferno, recounted how the accident happened.

Umar said: “It was terrifying. People were running in all directions, screaming for help. The fire spread so quickly that many couldn’t escape.”

**Residents triggered disaster —Police**

According to the Police Public Relations Officer of Jigawa State Command, DSP

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Lawan Adam, the disaster was triggered by residents who had rushed to collect spilt petrol after the tanker overturned.

DSP Adam said: "The residents were scooping fuel from the overturned tanker when the explosion occurred, sparking a massive inferno that killed 94 people on the spot. "The incident left another 50 people severely injured, who were then rushed to Ringim and Hadejia General Hospitals for treatment."

He further disclosed that the authorities commenced a mass burial for the victims, yesterday morning, with the entire community mourning the loss.

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**Minister, Lokpobiri directs Regulatory Authority to probe Jigawa tanker tragedy**

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He described the scene as a "horrific tragedy," emphasising the need for the public to understand the risks associated with scooping fuel from accident scenes.

Commissioner of Police in Jigawa State, AT Abdullahi, who expressed his condolences to the families of the deceased and the entire people of Jigawa State, said: "This is a heartbreaking moment for us all. We share in the pain and sorrow of the families affected. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the bereaved."

The commissioner called for increased public awareness regarding the dangers of petrol explosions and urged residents to report such incidents to relevant authorities.

"We appeal to the public to notify security agencies or relevant stakeholders when such accidents occur to prevent loss of life. Safety must be our priority," he added.

**Gov Namadi visits site, consoles victims**

Following the disaster, Governor Umar Namadi of Jigawa State visited the tanker explosion site.

The governor, who was accompanied by top government officials, visited the scene where he condoled with the victims of the explosion.

The governor, who consoled the families of the victims of the explosion, said the state government would offset the hospital bills of the injured.

**Tinubu sends high delegation to Jigawa**

Meanwhile, President Bola Tinubu, yesterday, directed the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, SGF, Senator George Akume, to lead a Federal Government delegation to Jigawa in response to Tuesday night's inferno in Majia town.

The Federal Government's delegation will comprise the Minister of Defence, Mohammed Badaru Abubakar; Minister of Transportation, Senator Saidu Alkali; Corps Marshall of the Federal Roads Safety Commission, FRSC, Mr Shehu Mohammed; and the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Community Engagement (North West), Abdullahi Tanko Yakasai.

While in Jigawa, the delegation will visit the scene of the incident to assess the situation and visit injured persons in the hospital.

A statement by Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, explained that President Tinubu further directed that emergency aid,

including medical supplies, food, and shelter, be extended to the 50 victims receiving treatment and others affected by the fire.

The statement reads: “The President, with a heavy heart, joins the Vice President in extending his deepest condolences to the families of the victims of this devastating incident.

“He expresses his heartfelt prayers and support to the government and people of Jigawa during this time of tragic loss and grief.

“He prays for divine comfort for the bereaved families and the peaceful repose for the souls of the departed.

“President Tinubu reassures the nation that the Federal Government, in collaboration with states, is committed to the swift and comprehensive review of fuel transportation safety protocols across the country.

“He restates his directive to the Federal Roads Safety Corps, FRSC, to strengthen night travel measures, such as increased patrols, stricter enforcement of safety regulations, and other highway safety mechanisms.”

**It's an unfortunate incident — NGF**

Also reacting to the explosion, the Nigeria Governors' Forum, NGF, yesterday, expressed sadness at the tragedy.

Chairman of the NGF, Mallam AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, who is also the Kwara State Governor, in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Rafiu Ajakaiye, described it as an unfortunate incident.

The statement reads: “The Forum sends its heartfelt condolences to the people and government of Jigawa State on this sad incident, especially families that lost their loved ones and those who sustained injuries in the fire.

“The NGF says the reported circumstances of the incident are worrisome, urging citizens to avoid taking advantage of petrol spills because of its volatility and existential danger.

“This unfortunate incident again calls attention to a need for improved safety protocols in the handling of combustible materials like petrol, including during unforeseen circumstances such as accident.”

**Senate observes minute silence**

Meanwhile, the Senate which observed a minute silence in honour of the dead urged the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management; and the National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, to provide relief materials to the victims of the inferno.

It also called on the National Orientation Agency and other relevant authorities to carry out adequate sensitization on the dangers of involvement in such hazardous practices.

Resolutions of the Senate yesterday were sequel to a motion titled ‘Fuel Tanker Explosion in Majia, Taura Local Government Area in Jigawa North Senatorial District of Jigawa State’.

In his presentation, Senator Babangida Hussaini (APC, Jigawa North West), said that the Senate described the development as rather unfortunate.

He said: “This catastrophic inferno occurred around 10:00 p.m. when the residents of the area trooped out en-masse to the accident scene to scoop fuel from the ill-fated taker, and while this was on, the tanker exploded, resulting in massive fire, difficult to control.

“Observes that this is one incident to many and it is often accompanied with unprecedented casualties, often difficult for medical facilities within the precinct of

the disaster. This development is rather unfortunate as it keeps happening over and over again in spite of fatalities that are often associated with the inferno.”

#### **Defence Minister expresses sadness**

In his reaction, the Minister of Defence, Dr Mohammed Badaru Abubakar, has extended his heartfelt condolences to the Government and People of Jigawa State following the tragic fuel tanker explosion in Majiya Town, Taura Local Government Area.

The Minister, in a statement by his aide on Media and Publicity, Mr Mati Ali expressed his deep sadness and sympathized with the families of the victims.

The statement reads: “I am deeply saddened by the tragic fuel tanker explosion that claimed precious lives and left many injured. My heart goes out to the people of Jigawa State during this difficult time. I pray that the souls of the departed rest in peace. May Almighty God grant their families the strength and fortitude to bear this irreparable loss. May the injured recover quickly and fully.”

#### **Oil Minister directs NMDPRA to probe the incident**

Meanwhile, Minister of State Petroleum Resources (Oil), Senator Heineken Lokpobiri, yesterday directed the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority, NMDPRA, to immediately commence a detailed investigation into the circumstances surrounding the tragic petrol tanker explosion that occurred in Majiya town, Taura Local Government Area, Jigawa State.

Senator Lokpobiri, in a statement by his Special Adviser, Media and

Communications, Nneamaka Okafor, expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives.

The statement reads: “On behalf of the Ministry of Petroleum Resources and the Federal Government, we extend our heartfelt condolences to the families and loved ones of those affected by this devastating incident.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the injured, and we wish them a swift and full recovery.

“Nigerians must desist from approaching vehicles transporting petroleum products that have been involved in accidents or mechanical failures. While we understand the temptation to freeloader, the dangers of attempting to collect spilt fuel cannot be overstated. The tragic loss of lives in this incident serves as a grim reminder of the severe risks involved.

“In light of this incident, the Ministry urges all petroleum transporters to ensure that only drivers who are certified and fully compliant with safety standards, as stipulated by the Federal Road Safety Corps, FRSC, are employed to transport petroleum products.

“The Ministry remains committed to ensuring Nigerians’ safety in all aspects of petroleum product distribution and transport. We will continue working closely with all relevant stakeholders to enforce stricter safety measures and prevent future occurrences.”