

## Jigawa explosion survivor recounts ordeal; death toll now 168



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Death toll in Tuesday's [fuel tanker explosion in Jigawa](#) State has risen to 168 with over 100 persons, who sustained various degrees of injuries, still receiving treatment in different hospitals.

This is coming as one of the survivors, Sabitu Yahaya, yesterday, narrated to Vanguard how he lost two siblings to the explosion after he narrowly escaped death, but with severe burns to tell the story.

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The Secretary to the State Government, Senator George Akume, who visited the state yesterday along with the Minister of Defence, Muhammad Badaru Abubakar, Minister of Interior, Olubunmi Ojo and the Director-General of the National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, Ms Zubaida Umar and others, gave assurance of government support for victims.

National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, Coordinator, Kano Territorial Office, Dr. Nuraddeen Abdullahi who gave update on the explosion said that the death toll had risen to 168 while over 100 sustained varying degrees of injuries.

#### **How I lost two siblings in explosion- Survivor**

Sabitu Yahaya, a survivor of the tanker explosion, yesterday, narrated how he escaped death by whiskers after suffering burns from his knees to his legs. Yahaya said this happened when he went in search of his younger ones who had gone to the scene of the incident. He said he lost two of his younger brothers while two others were hospitalised.

According to him: “I fell victim when I went in search of my younger ones to drag them away from the scene. Although, there were people who took advantage of the situation to scoop fuel, many of us were there to warn our relations because we know the implications. But we got trapped on getting there.

“I was a bit far away from the scene, so I only got burnt from my knees down to my legs because the petrol splashed around on the ground.

“The fire was never ignited by match stick as nobody went there with matches; it was caused by frictions from metals used by the people to fetch the petrol.

“In my family, we lost two while three of us were in the hospital bed. I got burnt from my knees down to my legs.”

Our correspondent gathered that the victims of the tragedy were scattered across hospitals in Dutse, Birnin Kudu, Gumel, Hadejia all in Jigawa, Nguru in Yobe and AKTH in Kano.

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Attempt by our correspondent to speak with survivors at the AKTH proved abortive as officials said there is standing order not to allow anybody aside caregivers to have access to them.

**FG directs FRSC to probe incident**

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has directed the Federal Road Safety Corps, FRSC, to immediately open investigation into the immediate and remote causes of the Tuesday night petrol tanker explosion

Secretary to the Government of the Federation, SGF, Senator George Akume, who made this known, yesterday, led a presidential delegation to Jigawa to condole with the government and people of the state, said the president was disturbed with the number of casualties and injured people.

He said the president has assured the government and people of the state that whoever was found wanting in carrying out their responsibility would not be spared, hoping the outcome of the investigation would go a long way in preventing the recurrence of similar incidents not only in the state, but other part of the federation.

Also on the SGF's entourage were the Ministers of Defence and Interior, Muhammad Badaru Abubakar and Olubunmi Ojo; Director-General of the National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, Ms Zubaida Umar; representative of the Corps Marshall of the Federal Road Safety Corps, FRSC, Muhammed Shehu; and the Senior Special Assitant to the President on Community Engagement, (North-West), Abdullahi Tanko Yakasai.

The Chairman of the Nigerian Governor's Forum, NGF, and Governor of Kwara State, Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq, and a former govenor of Jigawa State, Dr. Sule Lamido, and the Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Haruna Aliyu Dangyatin, among others accompanied the delegation.

The presidential team, which visited the Rasheed Shekoni Teaching Hospital, Dutse to see some of the victims was briefed by the medical personnel attending to the

to see some of the victims, was shared by the medical personnel attending to the victims.

According to him: “The President decided to assemble this delegation to condole the good people and government of state over this unfortunate incident.

“So many lives have been lost and we have visited some of the survivors in the hospital. The President has directed an immediate investigation by directing the FRSC on what has happened.

“This will go a long way in addressing the incessant carnages on our roads on daily basis. Indeed the president is saddened by the incident and he has already directed NEMA to move into action; and I’m happy NEMA has since swung into action. I can assure you that other agencies are going to follow suit.”

Akume lauded the swift action of the state government in the wake of the incident, saying the president was aware of the steps so far taken by the state Governor.

According to him: “The President is a friend of Jigawa State and I know what he says about Jigawa State. The President is with you all the time and so let’s look forward to how we are going to work together in future.”

The NGF Chairman said he was in Jigawa in solidarity with his Jigawa State counterpart on behalf of the remaining governors, saying they would be ever ready to render every necessary support to people of the state in this time of their trial.

**ACF urges urgent support for victims**

Meanwhile, the Arewa Consultative Forum, ACF, has said that emergency food, shelter, medications, etc., should be provided to victims of the tanker explosion in Majiya community, Jigawa State without bureaucratic delays.

ACF in a statement issued by Prof. Tukur Muhammad-Baba, the National Publicity Secretary, commiserated with the government and people of Jigawa State, over the tragic loss.

According to the ACF: “The incident occurred about two days ago, and as people rushed to scoop petrol gushing out of the tanker, there erupted a fire ball which led to the regrettable deaths and injuries.

That such avoidable incidents continue to happen with the catastrophic human costs are highly unfortunate, as they inevitably leave in their wake tales of woes of deaths, property losses and disruptions to livelihoods. Coming, as this instant incident happened to a population already facing daunting existential challenges caused by a downturn in the country’s economy, insecurity challenges, food shortages, etc., the incident is more than doubly tragic.

“ACF deeply mourns the lives lost and condoles the people of Majiya town specifically as well as the Government and people of Jigawa. ACF further prays for God Almighty’s succour to the injured, prays for their quick recovery and return to good health.

“ACF is also happy with the quick response of the Federal and state governments to the tragedy and calls on public emergency response and humanitarian relief agencies, the Nigeria Police, other first responders, including emergency medical, security, fire and services, state emergency agency personnel, aid organisations, to do more.

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“ Emergency food, shelter, medications, etc., should be provided to victims in the Majiya community without bureaucratic delays. As the victims inevitably affected family bread winners and vulnerable populations, attention must be given to them so that they return to what normal lives and livelihoods as can be managed under the circumstances. Humanitarian organizations and individuals of means need to key in in these regards.”

#### **PDP mourns victims**

The Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, yesterday, expressed grief over the petrol tanker explosion.

National Publicity Secretary of the PDP, Debo Ologunagba, in a statement in Abuja, said the party was saddened by the unfortunate incident.

He said: “This is another sad commentary on the wave of calamitous events that have befallen our nation as a result of worsening infrastructure, economic hardship and social disorientation in the last nine years.

“Our Party is saddened that innocent and heavily deprived Nigerians, especially our youths and bread winners of families continue to bear the ugly brunt of misgovernance in our country.

#### **NUPENG reacts**

Nigeria Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers, NUPENG, has also expressed sadness over Tuesday’s tanker explosion.

The union in a statement lamented the loss of over one hundred lives, destruction of properties and injuries sustained by many others in this devastating incident.

NUPENG in the statement by its President and General Secretary, Prince Williams Akporeha and Afolabi Olawole, said: “The leadership and entire members of the Nigeria Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers, NUPENG, express our deepest condolences to the families, friends, and communities affected by the tragic Petroleum Truck accident in Majiya, Taura Local Government Area of Jigawa State. “We are saddened by the loss of over one hundred precious lives, destruction of properties and injuries sustained by many others in this devastating incident.

**“Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their loved ones during this highly traumatic and difficult time.**

**“We stand in solidarity with the affected families, the entire community of Majiya and Jigawa State in general.**

**“We commend the efforts of all the emergency first responders who through their efforts put out the inferno and rescued many injured victims to the hospitals.**

**“We urge all relevant authorities to provide the necessary support and medical care to those injured and to take measures to prevent such tragedies in the future.**

**“May the souls of the departed rest in peace, and may their families find the strength to bear these irreparable losses.”**