

# 60 perish in Niger petrol tanker explosion



...NGF Chair, Gov Bago mourn

By Wole Mosadomi

No fewer than 60 people have died in a petrol tanker explosion that occurred at Dikko in Suleja Local Government Area of Niger State.

Several other people sustained varying degrees of injuries in the accident, yesterday.

Niger State Emergency Management Agency, NSEMA, said 50 people died in the explosion.

But Niger State Sector Commander of the Federal Road Safety Corps, Kumar Tsukwam, said 60 bodies were recovered at the scene.

However, the Director-General of NSEMA, Abdullahi Baba, said the tanker exploded when the driver was transferring the spilt content into another tanker.

His words: "The incident occurred when a tanker loaded with PMS crashed, and an attempt was made by the drivers to transfer its contents to a second tanker.

"In the process, the spilling PMS came in contact with a generator that was used to power the transfer process, triggering an explosion of flames that has caused over 50 deaths, injured many and destroyed properties estimated in millions."

Reacting to the incident, Niger State governor, Umar Bago, in a statement by his spokesperson, Bologi Ibrahim, described it as "worrisome, heartbreaking and unfortunate".

Bago sympathised with families of explosion victims and prayed for the departed souls.

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He directed concerned Ministries, Departments and Agencies, and MDAs, to take necessary actions. When he visited the scene, the governor also ordered the deployment of more doctors to Suleja to treat injured victims.

Bago decried the recklessness of some drivers, especially at the spot where the incident happened, saying it is not acceptable for any vehicle coming from Maje to pass through the bridge instead of under the bridge and make a U-turn appropriately.

He further called on the Sector Commander of the Federal Road Safety Corps to establish a post in the area to ensure the enforcement of the directive.

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, NGF, Governor Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq, yesterday, visited the scene of the explosion, describing the incident as devastating.

This was stated in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Rafiu Ajakaiye.

His words: "The Forum is saddened by the petrol tanker explosion in Niger State, in which dozens of people have been killed or injured.

"The Forum extends its heartfelt condolences to Governor Umar Bago, the families who have lost loved ones, and our other compatriots who got injured in the explosion.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the families who lost their loved ones in the incident, and we wish those injured quick healing.

"Again, we call on our compatriots to act with extreme caution and absolute respect for life at all times, especially in times of grave danger such as during a petrol spill."