

Niger tanker explosion: Senators, Obi, others rage as death toll hits 96

....Urge FRSC to ensure trucks comply with safety standards

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ABUJA—SENATORS of the 19 Northern states, Labour Party, LP, presidential candidate in the 2023 elections, and others, yesterday, raged as death toll of Saturday's petrol tanker accident at Dikko Junction, Dikko-Maje, Minna road in Gurara Local Government Area of Niger State, has reached 96.

Also, Governor Abba Yusuf of Kano State and Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Security, Senator Aliyu Abdullahi, expressed sadness over the deadly accident and commiserated with the families of the victims.

Updating on the development, yesterday, the Director-General, Niger State Emergency Management Agency, NSEMA, Abdullahi Baba-Arah, who informed that the death toll had risen to 96, said 69 persons were injured in the explosion, while 20 shops were burnt.

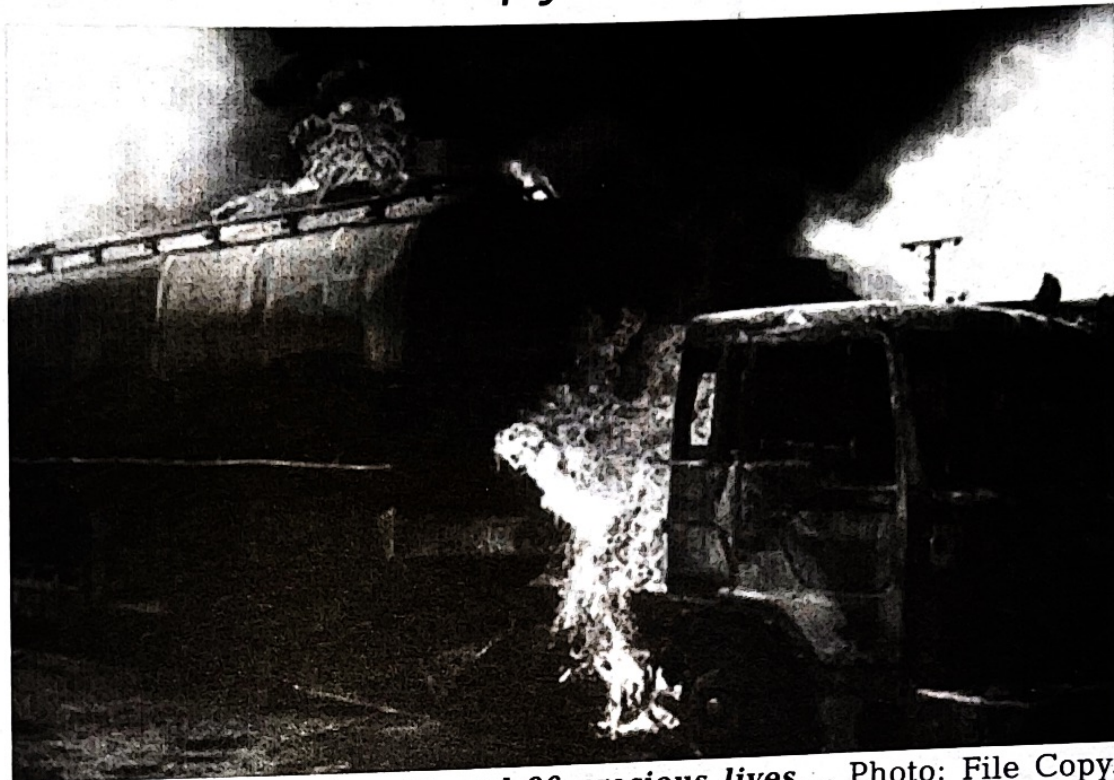
Meanwhile, the Northern senators, under the aegis of Northern Senators Forum, NSF, in a statement in Abuja by its Chairman, Abdulaziz Yar'Adua, urged the Federal Road Safety Corps, FRSC, and other relevant agencies to ensure that all tankers and heavy-duty vehicles are roadworthy and adhere to strict safety standards.

The statement read, "The Northern Senators are deeply saddened over the recent tragic petrol tanker explosion at Dikko junction on January 18, 2025, that have claimed numerous lives and left many others injured.

"This devastating incident highlights the need for greater vigilance and enforcement of safety regulations on our roads. This incident could have been avoided if the enforcement agencies had taken precautionary steps.

"As we mourn the loss of lives, the forum offers its sincerest condolences to the families and loved ones of the victims. May God grant the souls of all that was lost eternal rest."

Obi commiserates



• The explosion that swallowed 96 precious lives.... Photo: File Copy.

On his part Mr. Obi, also pleaded with relevant authorities to put in place stricter safety measures to avert a reoccurrence of such incidents.

Obi in a post, yesterday, on his X handle, among others, said, "The tragic petrol tanker explosion that occurred along Dikko-Maje Road in the Suleja Local Government Area of Niger State yesterday is truly heartbreaking. Reports indicate that over 70 lives were lost, while more than 50 people were injured in the incident.

"These accidents, which have sadly become increasingly recurrent in recent times, highlight the urgent need for the implementation of stricter safety measures to address the dangers of tanker explosions and similar incidents, which often result in colossal disasters.

"I sincerely commiserate with the families who lost their loved ones in the tragedy. I also extend my condolences to the Government and people of Niger State over this devastating incident. " May God grant them, and all of us, the fortitude to bear this loss, eternal rest to the departed, and a swift recovery to the injured."

Kano gov mourns

Similarly, Governor Yusuf extended condolences to the government and people of Niger State over the deadly incident.

The governor, in a statement by Director General of the Media and Publicity, Sunusi Bature, said: "This heartbreaking event is a grim reminder of the fragility of human life and the need for collective responsibility in ensuring safety."

Agric Minister grieves

Also, the Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Security, while wishing speedy recovery to more than 50 persons who suffered varying degrees of injuries, however praised the efforts of various emergency responders in evacuating the injured and de-escalating the spread of the inferno.

The minister in a statement expressed deep sadness over the recurrent incidents of fuel tanker crashes on highways, with the resultant human casualties, severe injuries, and destruction of adjoining properties.

He said: "Sorrow should not be our routine experience over frequent fuel tanker crashes on our roads. Scores are often killed in these incidents, and the spectacle of mass burial of the victims burnt beyond recognition is a wake-up call to all stakeholders to avert these types of occurrences.

"Part of what is urgently needed is advocacy programmes undertaken by stakeholders to address fallen fuel tanker issues, because no part of the country is insulated from the gory incidents.

"Communities need to enlighten their members on the precautions to take whenever there is an incident involving a fuel tanker. In particular, they must be reminded that fuel is highly volatile and that no amount of spilled fuel they are trying to scoop is worth the tragedy that usually lurks around."

He also called on Road Transport Owners and Road Transport Workers, especially those engaged in haulage of hazardous materials such as fuel, to organise frequent refresher programmes for their drivers, apprentices and all who are involved in the delivery chain.