

**REPORT OF INVESTIGATION INTO THE
WELLINGTON FIRE DISASTER OF
5TH NOVEMBER 2021**



**BY
PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE**

**For:
The Office of the President
Government of Sierra Leone**

**This document has been prepared by the Presidential Task Force Investigating
the Wellington Fire Disaster of 5th November 2021**

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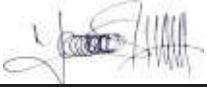
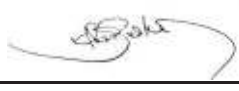






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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning
ASP	Assistant Superintendent (of Police)
BRV	Bulk Road Vehicle
CBA	Collective Bargaining Agreement
CCC	Command and Control Centre
CISU	Central Intelligence and Security Unit
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DHS	District Health Services
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid (Human hereditary material)
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DSP	Deputy Superintendent of Police
DTO	District Traffic Officer
DVI	Disaster Victim Identification
EPA-SL	Environment Protection Agency Sierra Leone
FCC	Freetown City Council
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
GPS	Global Positioning System
H.E.	His Excellency
ICC	Incident Command Centre
MAGIC	Medical and General Insurance Company
MD>WU	Motor Drivers and General Transport Workers Union
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MoHS	Ministry of Health and Sanitation
MOSW	Ministry of Social Welfare
MTI	Ministry of Trade and Industry
NDMA	National Disaster Management Agency
NEMS	National Emergency Medical Services
NFF	National Fire Force
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSCORD	National Security Coordinator

OMC	Oil Marketing Companies
ONS	Office of National Security
PHEOC	Public Health Emergency Operation Centre
PMB	Produce Marketing Board
PRA	Petroleum Regulatory Agency
RSLAF	Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces
SLIMS	Sierra Leone Incident Management System
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
SLRA	Sierra Leone Roads Authority
SLRCS	Sierra Leone Red Cross Society
SLRSA	Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure

PREFACE

This investigation into the Wellington petrol tanker fire disaster of 5th November 2021 is founded on the promise made by His Excellency the President, Brigadier (Rtd) Dr Julius Maada Bio to the people of Sierra Leone that he would constitute a credible team to conduct a thorough investigation into the circumstances surrounding the petrol tanker disaster.

To this end, a Presidential Task Force was formed that was given specific Terms of Reference to investigate the causation of the accident and proffer recommendation(s) to avoid future occurrences; look into the conduct of traffic management officers close to the scene of the accident and the capacity of disaster management institutions amongst other things.

The methodology adopted in writing this report constituted series of research instruments vetted by the Presidential Task Force. A six-man committee for data analyses and report writing backed by an investigation committee was formed.

Findings from individual institutional reports and those of the Presidential Task Force formed the basis of this report. The Task Force studied the content of existing documents coupled with independent research to present its findings and recommendations on the Wellington petrol tanker fire disaster.

The Presidential Task Force expresses its sincere appreciation and gratitude to everyone who in diverse ways helped to make this report possible.



Lt Gen (Rtd) Brima Sesay
Chairman Presidential Task Force

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Wellington Fire Disaster of 5th November 2021, occurred following a collision between a fuel tanker and a tipper truck carrying granite. The crash resulted in spillage of the petrol from the Bulk Road Vehicle's (BRV) storage compartment and scooping of the product by some members of the public. This was followed by a huge explosion forty-two (42) minutes later due to the fuel being ignited from a spark generated from the activities of some members of the public scooping the fuel. The fire, which raged on for close to 5 hours, claimed numerous lives and properties, with a death toll of one hundred and fifty-four (154).

On 26th January 2022, His Excellency the President commissioned a Presidential Task Force to look into the cause(s) of the incident, assess the response of various Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and other relevant stakeholders to the disaster, draw conclusions and make recommendations for the attention of the Office of the President.

The Presidential Task Force, chaired by the Director General of the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) established two (2) subcommittees to carry out the ground work required to fulfil the terms of reference for the assigned task. A number of research instruments considered pertinent and useable by the subcommittees appointed and approved by the Presidential Task Force were used. These instruments included site visits, questionnaires, interviews and reports prepared by various institutions constituting the Sierra Leone Incident Management System (SLIMS).

Following a review of primary and secondary information collected by the Task Force, a number of recommendations were made to prevent the recurrence of similar disasters and improve on the response of the institutions involved in disaster management. The recommendations are discussed in detail in Section seven (7) of this report, but key among them, are the following:

1. There is the need to capacitate NDMA in terms of vehicles (light and heavy). It came out clearly in the response that there were delays in moving both the injured and the dead because the NDMA does not hold integral vehicles. The Agency had to rely on partners like the National Emergency Medical Services (NEMS) and the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) and others to move the dead and those who sustained injuries from the fire incident.
2. The fire disaster occurred following the collision between the fuel tanker and the tipper truck, over half an hour before the violent explosion. There was poor communication between security services and the Petroleum Regulatory Agency that has the responsibility for regulating oil marketing companies (OMCs). The need to enhance effective communication among all players in the SLIMS cannot be over emphasized.
3. The youths and other members of the public that were involved in scooping of the petroleum product were not aware of the enormity of the hazard posed by their actions. When they were advised to stay away from the scene, most interpreted it as an act of deprivation, purely due to lawlessness. Thus, there is an urgent need to provide sufficient sensitization to the public on the dangers of fuel and gas products.

4. The National Fire Force (NFF) is constrained by very limited number of fire fighters. The Force has insufficient personnel, engines, equipment, and chemicals to respond to fire incidents countrywide. Vehicles and equipment available for firefighting, search and rescue operations fall short of the number required to effectively and efficiently discharge the duty of saving lives and properties. The Force is therefore faced with a daunting national task to respond to emergencies with very limited capacity and capability.
5. It is noted that NFF has developed a fire safety bill for the country. Slow pace in the approval of this bill is causing lots of challenges for incident management institutions. Thus, it is strongly recommended that the Ministry of Internal Affairs expeditiously initiate engagement with Cabinet and Parliament on the afore said bill. This will give the National Fire Force the capacity and leverage to ensure constructive engagement on fire prevention countrywide.
6. There is need for improved incident response training and familiarity including cordoning practices for police and responders; this is considered cardinal for implementation of an effective coordination mechanism.
7. Insufficient trained Human Resource, vehicles and equipment are common factors requiring urgent attention among several institutions consulted including the NFF, Sierra Leone Police (SLP), Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority (SLRSA), National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), Freetown City Council (FCC) and Motor Drivers and General Transport Workers Union (MDGTWU).
8. A major challenge deduced from the disaster is the absence of a Burns Unit in the country's health infrastructure. The need for a Burns Unit in the overall arrangement of our national health management system cannot be over emphasized. In addition to this, there needs to be recruitment and training of burns specialists as well as availability of relevant drugs and equipment.

The Wellington Fire Incident is among the biggest fire disasters to have occurred in living memory in Freetown. The city has suffered a number of fire incidences in recent years, but the scale of the Wellington petrol tanker disaster under investigation is classed to be among the worst based on the sheer scale of destruction. The level of cooperation and collaboration exhibited by the various institutions involved in the response in terms of coordination, despite the numerous limitations, is worth commending.

As His Excellency the President constituted a multi stakeholder task force to examine the veracity of causes, effects, and management of the entire response, it is anticipated that views in this report together with findings and recommendations will be the beacon of hope for a complete change in terms of approach and strategies by emergency management institutions in the country.

1 BACKGROUND

On 5th November 2021, a devastating petrol tanker fire disaster occurred at Wellington which resulted in the death and destruction of lives and properties.

According to reports generated by first responders and eyewitnesses (various MDAs), 15,000 litres of petrol was loaded into a BRV/fuel tanker with licence registration number AQB 602 by NP (SL) Limited at the Leone Oil Company Kissy Fuel Depot at 19:40hrs, to be delivered to Kalinda Sympathizer Enterprise Gas station in Bo.

It was reported that the driver of the fuel tanker went to seek tyre service at Old Wharf Junction, Wellington, which was not available. Unable to service the tyre, the driver decided to negotiate a U-turn towards Calaba Town from the main Bai Bureh Road, from Old Wharf Junction. In the process, the BRV was hit by a tipper truck with registration number AQM 928 carrying granite stones, coming from the direction of Calaba Town.

The crash resulted in spillage of the petrol from the BRV's storage compartment and scooping of the product by some members of the public. The pleas of the tanker driver and apprentice to avoid the scene, as the situation presented a potential danger for disaster, were apparently ignored. According to reports, the driver left the scene to solicit help from the nearby military deployment at Produce Marketing Board (PMB) junction after receiving a lukewarm response from the Traffic Police stationed near the accident area. The apprentice of the tanker was eventually outnumbered by the crowd – including motorbike riders and community youths – who were eager to have access to the fuel spilling from the tanker.

It is reported that at some point in the ensuing chaos, the fuel tanker's discharge valve was forcefully opened by some members of the public, allowing for a larger flow of fuel from the tanker's compartments. Eyewitness accounts informed that individuals used various types and sizes of containers ranging from 5-gallon jerry cans to motorbike safety helmets, to collect the fuel from the tanker, which had also begun to leak into nearby gutters and spread out into the wider vicinity of the accident site. Additionally, the individuals collecting the fuel, transported it to nearby locations, further spreading the footprint of the petrol around the site.

A traffic jam allegedly developed as a result of vehicles, motorbikes, and "kekes"¹ being abandoned on the carriageway by the drivers involved in scooping up the fuel. The accident also coincided with rush hour traffic with people on their way home from work. At some point following the accident, while individuals were still collecting the fuel, a spark from an unverified source ignited and led to a huge explosion resulting in destruction of properties, injuries and deaths.

As a sequel to the disaster, several incident reports were prepared providing details on the accident. In addition to these incident reports, His Excellency the President, Brigadier (Rtd) Dr Julius Maada Bio commissioned a Task Force to Investigate the incident and present findings and recommendations to prevent future occurrences.

¹ Motorized tricycles or tuk-tuks

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE

On 26th January 2022, H. E. the President commissioned a 13-man Presidential Task Force, which was later amended, following the maiden meeting of the Task Force, to a total of 15 members (see annex A of the appendices for the complete list) to look into the cause(s) of the incident, assess the response of various MDAs to the disaster, draw conclusions and make recommendations for the attention of the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL).

Below are the specific terms of reference for the Presidential Task Force on the Wellington Fire Disaster:

- To investigate and produce a report on the cause(s) of the disaster and recommend ways to avoid future occurrences.
- To investigate the actions by officers of the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority (Traffic Corps) and the Sierra Leone Police deployed at the PMB area following the collision.
- To investigate and ascertain the capability (technical, human resource, equipment, etc) of the National Disaster Management Agency(NDMA), Sierra Leone Police(SLP), National Fire Force(NFF) and Government Medical Services and Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces(RSLAF) in response to the Wellington Fire Disaster.
- To investigate and ascertain the preparedness mechanisms of the National Disaster Management Agency and Sierra Leone Police to prevent disaster, contain disaster and support the delivery of responses.
- To investigate and ascertain whether there is a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to respond to national disasters and if there was any breach.
- To examine the relevant regulations on fuel transportation and ascertain whether there was any breach in the regulations.
- To ascertain the insurance status of the fuel tanker and recommend on best practice for the insurance policy on Bulk Road Vehicles.
- To evaluate Government response to the victims of the disaster.

2.1 Assumptions and Limitations

The following assumptions and limitations were taken into consideration during the investigation:

- This investigation in the midst of many other reported fire disasters in the country, is limited to the Wellington Petrol Tanker Fire Disaster of 5th November 2021.
- The timeframe for engagement of stakeholder institutions (state and non-state actors) for the production of a comprehensive report is limited to eight (8) weeks - 26th January to 23rd March 2022.
- This investigation is limited to emergency management institutions within the standard framework of Government Response Mechanism to disasters.

3 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Task Force

The Presidential Task Force, chaired by the Director General of NDMA established two (2) subcommittees (annex B: list of subcommittee members) to carry out the ground work required to fulfil the terms of reference for the assigned task as follows:

- Investigative Subcommittee
- Data Analysis and Report Writing Subcommittee

The subcommittees met a minimum of twice a week and progress reports were presented to the main Task Force on a weekly basis.



Figure 1: Meeting of Subcommittees at NDMA Office

A number of research instruments considered pertinent and useable by the subcommittees appointed and approved by the Presidential Task Force were used. These instruments included questionnaires, interviews and reports prepared by various institutions constituting the Sierra Leone Incident Management System (SLIMS) as follows:

Table 1: List of Incident Reports reviewed by the Task Force

Institution	Report Date
National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA)	6 th November 2021
Sierra Leone Police (SLP)	10 th January 2022
National Fire Force (NFF)	6 th November 2021
Petroleum Regulatory Agency (PRA)	8 th November 2021
Motor Drivers and General Transport Workers Union (MD>WU)	12 th November 2021

Institution	Report Date
Sierra Leone Insurance Commission	24 th November 2021
NP (Sierra Leone) Ltd	6 th November 2021
Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority (SLRSA)	28 th November 2021
Sierra Leone Insurance Commission	-

The Task Force maintained the overall responsibility for ensuring quality control of the outputs of the subcommittees. All investigation instruments and the various versions of the draft report, leading up to the final report were shared with members of the Task Force, to review, fact-check, modify and approve.

3.2 Investigative Subcommittee

The Investigative Subcommittee comprised of representatives from SLP, NFF, SLRSA, and Petroleum Regulatory Agency (PRA), FCC, and the Sierra Leone Roads Authority (SLRA) and were responsible for collecting primary data from institutions directly involved in the accident investigation and incident response.

3.2.1 Review of Secondary Information

A review of the incident reports prepared by various institutions and eyewitnesses was conducted to determine where there were information gaps which needed to be captured during the data gathering exercise and submission of final report.

3.2.2 Questionnaires

Different sets of questionnaires (Annex C) were developed and directed towards specific institutions with a bearing on the petrol tanker disaster. The questionnaires were pre-tested to determine suitability and appropriateness in eliciting primary information, which was analysed alongside secondary information available on the accident.

3.2.3 Key Informant Interviews

The Investigative Subcommittee engaged heads of institutions, senior operatives of institutions and some members of the public that witnessed the event and/or were involved in the search and rescue operation. Views and opinions gathered from these interviews were analysed and formed a major contribution to the findings and recommendations of this report.

3.3 Data Analyses and Report Writing Subcommittee

The data analyses and report writing subcommittee was tasked with review and analysis of primary and secondary data and information, as well as compiling the investigation report in collaboration with the main Task Force. The 6-man subcommittee comprised representatives of various institutions including NDMA, SLRSA, Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS), MD>WU, Private Sector and Civil Society Organizations.

3.3.1 Review of Secondary Information

A detailed review of the available incident reports was undertaken to identify commonalities, as well as variations in the different accounts of the accident. Reports were reviewed and discussed individually. Additionally, legislative instruments relevant to the transportation of fuel/ hazardous substances were examined.

3.3.2 Site Visit

A site visit was conducted by the team to obtain a visual understanding of the incident scene, and what transpired on the night of the accident. Conversations were also held with some individuals from the community.

3.3.3 Analysis of Primary Data

Prior to the administration of questionnaires and interviews by the investigative committee, the instruments were reviewed and modified as necessary to ensure maximum efficacy of the data collection process.

Information from the data collection exercise were reviewed in line with the information already available in previous reports. Based on these analyses, gaps in information were filled and deductions made to further clarify the sequence of events following the accident.

3.3.4 Report Writing

Report writing was collaborative. The format and broad headings of the report were agreed upon and each section compiled during group sessions, with additions and modifications recommended by the Task Force reflected as necessary.



Figure 2: Working Session of the Report Writing Subcommittee

4 DISCUSSION ON REVIEW OF SECONDARY DATA

4.1 Regulation for Transportation of Bulk Fuel on Highways

Part VI (a) 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 of Statutory instrument of 2016, regarding downstream petroleum regulation in Sierra Leone details specific guidelines for the transportation of petroleum product by road. The essence of including this regulatory framework into this report is to determine any violation that may have precipitated the explosion of the petrol tanker fire disaster under investigation.

- Part VI (a) 2 - The regulation stipulates those vehicles shall be maintained in good condition and free of leakage. They shall be conspicuously labelled with words “Highly Inflammable” and painted bright red. An air space of not less than ten percent of their capacity shall be left when filling. All inlet and outlet shall be properly secured and gas tight.
- Part VI (a) 3 - Competent person or persons shall be in charge of tanker vehicles at all times as authorised by the licensee. No unauthorised person shall be permitted to ride on the vehicle. Smoking and the use of naked light shall not be permitted in the vicinity of the vehicle. The vehicle shall not be halted within sixty feet of a fire or open flame.
- Part VI (a) 4 - Tank vehicles shall be loaded and unloaded in accordance with rules approved by the Director of Public Works for each design of vehicle.
- Part VI (a) 5 - No tank shall be loaded or unloaded between sunset and sunrise.
- Part VI (a) 6 - The premise occupied by tank vehicle when under the control of the licensee, shall be kept in clean condition free from grass, weeds, and all inflammable materials
- Part VI (a) 7 - Due precautions shall at all times be taken against fire including the maintenance of fire extinguisher appliances of approved design. Notices prohibiting smoking, lighting of matches and the carrying of unprotected light shall be provided and fixed in prominent positions in and about the premises.
- Part VI (a) 8 - The premises and tank vehicles when under the control of the licensee, shall be efficiently protected against unauthorised approach or interference.

4.2 Summary of Incident Reports

This section discusses key details presented in the incident reports reviewed as an integral part of this investigation.

4.2.1 Source of Ignition Causing the Explosion

A number of postulations were advanced as possible causes of the explosion. These include the following:

- The fire started due to sparks from the exhaust of a commercial vehicle that was caught in the traffic resulting from the accident. It is suggested that this is one reason for the massive death of people in stationary vehicles.
- A passer-by who had been smoking a cigarette discarded the butt in an area where the fuel leak had spread to, resulting in the explosion.

- A motorbike which had its engine running, fell in the fuel causing the explosion.
- Scooping of fuel by youths and other members of the public could have resulted in a spark that led to the fire.
- The people within the vicinity of the accident tried to steal the batteries, resulting in sparks leading to the fire outbreak.

4.2.2 Emergency Response Operations

The NDMA, SLP, NFF, Office of National Security (ONS), Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS), NEMS and other emergency management institutions from different Government Institutions, Ministries, Departments and Agencies worked in close collaboration and cooperation in putting down the raging fire.

A major requirement for emergency management institutions to respond to national or local emergencies is alerts. This section discusses the timing of alerts and the response actions initiated.

4.2.2.1 National Fire Force

The NFF is the principal institution of Government charged with the responsibility of fire prevention and response across the country. Its deployment is seen across major provincial districts of the country.

According to the incident report submitted by the NFF, an alert was sent to the call room of NFF reporting a blazing fire at PMB vicinity. The call was made on the evening of Friday, 5th November 2021, at approximately 21:34Hrs, by police officer P.C 14957 Ibrahim Kamara. In response, the NFF released the First Pump (Fire Engine) in line of Fire Defence from the Kissy Fire station to the scene.

Upon arrival at about 21:47Hrs, the Firefighters (crew) noticed that the fire had completely engulfed both the tanker and the truck. They also noticed that vehicles, motorbikes, tricycles and two container houses were on fire. As the volume of fire was massive, the crew immediately started its operation to extinguish the fire, but the rate at which it was blazing led the Firefighters to call for additional Fire Engines from the Headquarter Fire Station and Seama Town Fire Station.



Figure 3: Cross Section of Firefighters Battling the Blaze on the night of 5th November 2021

The fire was fought by firefighters equipped with four (4) fire engines using large volumes of Class B foam solution (specific for use in petroleum-based fires) and water. The blaze was successfully extinguished at about 1:00am on the 6th of November 2021. At day break, NFF was back on the scene doing cooling off, while also helping clear the site alongside SLP, NDMA, FCC, SLRSA and MD>WU. Authority was given to the police to open up the traffic at about 15:30 hrs on the advice of the Chief Fire Officer.

NFF's response was somewhat constrained by the absence of working fire hydrants in the vicinity of the accident. Filling of fire engines had to be done at the Kissy Fire Station and Macdonald (beyond Waterloo); the closest functional hydrant to the incident scene, was at Eastern Police (which was far away). Some damage was sustained to the NFF equipment (hoses) as a result of the intensity of the blaze.

4.2.2.2 Sierra Leone Police

The SLP is responsible for cordoning off all disaster sites, through the provision of an inner and outer cordon. It works in collaboration with other emergency management institutions of the Government, protecting disaster scenes and preventing anti-social behaviour by members of the public.

On receipt of information on the disaster at 21:58 hrs, a team of police officers headed by the officer commanding Wellington Police Post visited the crime scene. They supported the operations by the removal of the injured and deceased from the incident site, to various medical centres (hospitals). In the morning of 6th November 2021, the police cordoned the epicentre of the disaster by running a red tape around the disaster zone as a measure to prevent the public from intruding into scene. This situation was maintained until the visit by the Vice President and the President respectively.

4.2.2.3 National Disaster Management Agency

The NDMA is the parent body of Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) charged with the responsibility for managing disaster preparedness, prevention, mitigation, response and recovery across the length and breadth of Sierra Leone. It manages disaster on behalf of GoSL, and enforces policies related to management of disasters within the framework of the law.

On the evening of the emergency, the leadership of the NDMA worked with other first responders in addressing the emergency. The institution assisted in the movement of casualties from the disaster scene to various medical centres, and followed up on the status of medical situation of the affected population. The Agency solicited the support of NEMS and the RSLAF to move casualties and fatalities from the epi centre to various hospitals in Freetown. It also informed the public of the steps taken by GoSL in addressing the disaster, and provided a forum for the coordination of response in the post-disaster phase of the incident. The institution briefed the strategic leadership of GoSL on steps taken in addressing the disaster.

4.2.2.4 Ministry of Health and Sanitation

MoHS has responsibility for the health status of the population, and ensure due diligence in service delivery to people affected by disasters.

On the evening of November 5th 2021, the institution was alerted of a massive fire disaster that affected lives and properties. It opened up its medical centre and called upon health workers in response to the event. MoHS instructed the leadership of NEMS to release ambulances to the fire disaster site and transport victims to various hospitals in the city.

The Central Referral Hospital (Connaught) was overwhelmed with corpses and burn victims. Thus, some patients were taken to other medical facilities including 34 Military Hospital at Wilberforce, Choithrams Hospital at Hill Station, Emergency Hospital in Goderich and Rokupa Satellite Hospital.



Figure 4: Disaster Victims awaiting treatment at Connaught Hospital

Medical Doctors, Nurses and other essential health workers converged at the Connaught Hospital to give support to and aid victims. The Chief Medical Officer authorized the medical specialist working with pharmacies to open the drug stores in support of the fire affected victims.

4.2.2.5 National Emergency Medical Services (NEMS)

This institution has responsibility for the provision of ambulance services for the population. In times of emergencies, it can be called on for effective service delivery to victims of disasters. NEMS was called to the scene on the night of the emergency and responded by releasing several ambulances to help evacuate the injured and dead.

4.2.2.6 Office of the President

On the night of 5th November 2021, the Honourable Vice President visited the disaster scene, followed by a tour of all health facilities that received the affected population. He encouraged health workers to deliver their best and ensure protection of lives in the midst of the dire challenging situation. On the morning of 6th November 2021, the Vice President, Dr Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh visited the disaster scene again and engaged the affected community. He declared the event as a disaster and promised GoSL's commitment in doing its best to address those affected by the fire.

His Excellency the President, Brigadier (Rtd) Dr Julius Maada Bio who was out of the country when the accident occurred, cut short his visit to Glasgow where he was attending the 2021, United Nations Climate Change Conference. The President arrived in Sierra Leone in the evening of Saturday 6th November 2021 and immediately visited the victims at the Connaught and 34 Military hospital.

The following day ,7th November 2021, the President visited the disaster scene and promised Government's support to the affected population. In the evening of the same day, the President addressed the nation in a televised broadcast in which he commended the first responders, offered condolences to the bereaved families, reassured the victims of Governments support and promised to establish a Presidential Task Force to investigate the circumstances surrounding the disaster. The leadership of President was compassionate, empathetic, decisive and admirable.



Figure 5: His Excellency, the Director General of NDMA and other dignitaries being briefed by the Incident Commander at the Incident Command Centre (ICC- Wellington)

Coordination of Response

Two levels of coordination were activated to handle the response, and are discussed in the following subsections.

4.2.2.7 Strategic Coordination

This constitutes the overall coordination of the response. This was spearheaded by the NDMA and included state and non-state actors. NDMA ensured the activation of the SLIMS through the establishment of an Incident Command Centre (ICC) with the Director of Relief and Response as Incident Commander.



Figure 6: Incident Command Centre setup in Choithrams Supermarket Compound, Wellington

This was coordinated within the compound of Choithrams Supermarket at Wellington. All of the fourteen pillars of response operation were activated. The NDMA worked with partners in the collection of data including the affected population, and in addition conducted damage and loss assessment of the disaster.

The Agency received donations from different sources including medical assistance. Donations were also received by the MoHS. A complete inventory of both material and financial support was catalogued into a database. All cash donated to the response were sent to the Disaster Relief Account lodged with the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank. Updates of assistance provided were done through power point presentations at the general coordination meetings. NDMA in partnership with MoHS updated members of the public on efforts made by GoSL towards the response. It is noted that all of the injured victims were provided free medical attention throughout their admissions, and are still receiving treatment at out-patients.

4.2.2.8 Operational Coordination

This was mainly led by the MoHS. In view of the enormity and severity of impact of the disaster, MoHS agreed with NDMA to activate a level two disaster situation in the country. The Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC) was immediately activated as the disaster was health related. This level is activated in the face of growing and potential threat of disasters to lives and property of the public. As the response was a medical response, all of the medical pillars including laboratory, case management, surveillance, food and nutrition, and a host of other relevant pillars were activated.

Provision of statistical data on figures of death, severely burnt, hospitalized, discharged and those with special needs in terms of food were provided by the MoHS. This was necessary against the backdrop of the fact that the disaster was a fuel tanker disaster, but the carnage associated with it in terms of death and burn victims warranted this understanding.

5 DISCUSSION ON PRIMARY DATA COLLECTED

5.1 Investigative Subcommittee

The investigative subcommittee conducted interviews with representatives of key institutions with a bearing on the events of 5th November 2021. The following sub-sections present a summary of discussions held with each institution between the 10th and 19th February 2022.

5.1.1 National Disaster Management Agency



Figure 7: His Excellency, the Director General of NDMA and other dignitaries being briefed by the Incident Commander at the Incident Command Centre (ICC - Wellington).

Representatives of NDMA were interviewed including the Director General and the Director of Disaster Relief and Response. They highlighted the mandate of NDMA established in November 2020, following the passing of an Act of Parliament, which is to manage every disaster in the country. Information about the Wellington Fire Disaster was initially received through a call from the Office of National Security (ONS) and Central Intelligence and Security Unit (CISU). NDMA staff mobilised on the scene on the night of the accident, contacting key response agencies including NFF, NEMS, RSLAF, and SLP. National Security Coordinator (NSCORD) further informed the Vice President.

The Incident Command Centre was subsequently established involving all NGOs, Red Cross, SLP, NFF, RSLAF, MoHS, Ministry of Social Welfare (MOSW) etc. and various pillars established.



Figure 8: Inter-pillar coordination meetings at NDMA Office, following Disaster

The major issues affecting the disaster response had to do with the lack of nearby water sources in the absence of hydrants, insufficient ambulances, personnel and vehicles. The NDMA has no integral vehicles to enable it respond to emergencies. The response time was however considered good, despite these setbacks. Coordination among first responders and other agencies was cordial and effective, with swift response from all, making it possible for the fire to be extinguished, and victims quickly transported to hospitals and morgues.

Going forward, NDMA intends to implement a number of strategies to limit the likelihood of similar disasters recurring; key among these include engaging PRA to obtain an understanding of their policies, find out locations of key sector infrastructure (e.g. filling stations), roll out a Disaster Risk Management Policy, looking into the issue of illegal squatters around the fuel storage terminal at Kissy, the timing for loading and dispatching of fuel tankers, and public sensitization on the dangers of interfering with fuel tankers or storage facilities.

5.1.2 Sierra Leone Police

Interviews were conducted with the Inspector General of Police, the Director of Operations, the Wellington Police Post Commander, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) who is the District Traffic Officer (DTO) of the Calaba Town Police Station.

Recounting the day of the accident, the officers near the scene reported that they received information about the disaster from people running away shouting about a huge fire at PMB Old wharf junction. Officers not near the scene reported that they received information on the incident through phone calls and social media. The police lamented the absence of a central communication system and the fact that they had to depend on mobile phone communication, which somewhat delayed response coordination.

At the scene, SLP personnel focussed on cordoning off the area, crowd control, traffic diversion, evacuation of victims and general security of the scene. Despite these efforts, evidence tampering occurred in the early stages of the accident before Scene of Crime Officers arrived at the epicentre. The response effort was further constrained by insufficient vehicles to transport personnel, lack of communication sets and absence of personnel trained in disaster management.

The inter-institutional cooperation was described as effective in spite of the limitations, with NFF, MoHS, RSLAF the Media and a number of patriotic citizens hailed for their heroic support.

Areas highlighted as requiring improvement include:

- Crowd control and traffic diversion by SLP.
- Vehicle availability to ensure timeliness of officers on the scene of incidents, crimes, etc.
- Disaster response and management training for all institutions involved in disaster response.
- Public sensitization and awareness raising on the risks associated with petroleum product accidents. This should include simulation exercises to ensure all major players are familiar with their roles in emergency situations.

5.1.3 Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority

The Investigative Committee conducted an interview with the Deputy Executive Director of SLRSA. He informed that he had received information about the disaster through social media. Following receipt of the information, SLRSA mobilised officers to join other first responders on the scene – NFF, NDMA, SLP and RSLAF – to tackle the fire and its aftermath. SLRSA was involved in clearing the build-up of traffic, remove burn victims and human remains, and in subsequent days, remove burnt vehicles from the site. He noted deficiencies in their operations including limited number of personnel (only 300 Road Safety Corps countrywide), equipment and recovery vehicles, saying that these issues and the lack of a centralized coordination system contributed to delayed response to the incident. Remarking on areas of their response and operations in general requiring improvement, he listed the need for a centralized emergency communication system (toll-free lines), incident reporting centre, and a road safety coordination committee.

5.1.4 Sierra Leone Roads Authority

An interview was held with the Director of Environment and Social Safeguards Division. She reported that she first received news about the disaster on radio and social media. Although she stated that SLRA was not actively involved in the search and rescue effort, coordination between SLRA and other MDAs involved in the effort was effective.

Commenting on the accident itself which occurred prior to the explosion, she cautioned that reckless driving and insisting on being in the right, in certain situations on the road could result in very dangerous outcomes. She advised road users to exercise more caution.

Speaking generally on areas requiring improvement in the execution of their duties, she informed that more needs to be done in the area of erecting road signs, as road signs erected are regularly stolen by thieves who use the materials to produce other items.

5.1.5 National Fire Force

Interviews were conducted with the Chief Fire Officer, Kissy Fire Station Commander and the Head of Fire Prevention Officer.

According to NFF representatives, information about the fire disaster was received at 21:34hrs on the night of 5th November 2021. Within 10 minutes a fire engine had been dispatched from Kissy with a team of available firefighters headed by a Station Officer. On arrival at the scene and assessing the extent of the blaze, the Kissy Fire Station Officer contacted the Fire Force Headquarters, the Training School Fire Station in Seama Town and the Aberdeen Fire Station for reinforcement. A total of 50 firefighters (using 4 fire engines) worked to put out the fire, using water and foam solution over the course of 5 hours.

Challenges listed in relation to their response to the accident included difficulty accessing the scene as the surrounding area was crowded with human and vehicular traffic, delaying firefighters from reaching the epicentre. The public did offer some help in clearing the way for the fire engines and firefighters. Other challenges included lack of sufficient specialized equipment (fire engines), lack of fire hydrants in the vicinity of the accident and inadequate number of personnel.

Coordination with other institutions responding to the fire was described as good, noting prompt response from SLP, SLRSA, NDMA, RSLAF, MoHS, The Red Cross and the FCC.

The following areas were highlighted for improvement of NFF's response to situations of this nature:

- Increase human resource
- Improve provision of specialized equipment and vehicles
- Establish fire stations in more communities across the country
- Establish fire safety laws and regulations
- Provision of additional hydrants

5.1.6 Petroleum Regulatory Agency

The Executive Chairperson of the PRA was interviewed on the disaster. He reported receiving information on the disaster through calls from his staff and members of the public, as well as on social media. PRA staff were then immediately deployed to obtain first-hand information about the disaster and liaise with relevant stakeholders in the initial disaster response, and subsequently to provide medical and psycho social support to victims. He informed that PRA acted on the Agency's mandate to ensure that a comprehensive investigation into the disaster was conducted and a report submitted. Additionally, high level engagements were held as part of the response, with inter-sectoral committee on health, safety and environment comprising ONS, SLP, Environment Protection Agency Sierra Leone (EPA-SL) etc.

Going forward, he assured that the PRA has reinstituted a Risk Management Department to supervise and ensure risk reduction in the petroleum sector.

5.1.7 NP (Sierra Leone) Ltd

An interview was held with the Finance and Account Manager of NP. He informed that he had received the call about the accident from NP's Head of Security, following which, a team was put together equipped with spill kits and foam, joining NFF and other agencies to fight the fire. He commended the cooperation between the NP and the other agencies involved in controlling the disaster, but highlighted a gap in communication, insufficient firefighting vehicles, and the actions of members of the general public who did not cooperate with law enforcement agencies, as contributing factors to the delay in bringing the situation under control.

He assured that yearly fire safety training is usually provided for NP personnel and added that additional measures including the installation of spill kits in strategic locations in the country, provision of spill kits for all BRV drivers, and daily briefs on fire safety measures are being considered going forward.

5.1.8 Motor Drivers & General Transport Workers Union (MD>WU)

The President of MD>WU informed that they received a call regarding the accident from a member of the Union. He informed that the Union joined other first responders through the provision of sacks of sand to combat the fire, and trucks for conveying victims of the accident to hospitals and morgues. Messages were also sent out through the Union's communication channels, advising drivers to avoid the route leading to the accident site for their safety and also to allow free flow of NFF and other responders accessing the scene.

He recommended that sensitization and training of drivers and the general public on fire safety and handling of emergency situations would help prevent a repeat of similar events.

5.1.9 Ministry of Health and Sanitation

An interview was conducted with the Incident Manager of the MoHS Operations. He noted that the ministry received information about the disaster through their referral coordinators. The ministry proceeded to collect and transport burn victims and corpses to hospitals. The injured were treated, DNA samples were collected from unrecognised corpses and the corpses buried. An incident management structure was initiated with different pillars, which included coordination with various MoHS stakeholders and partners.

Highlighting the limitations of MoHS response, the Incident Manager listed the lack of burns units, limited number of personnel trained in burns care, insufficient equipment to manage burns cases, lack of a local emergency team and inadequate paramedical resuscitation at the site of the accident. He however praised the support received from MoHS partners, which he said was good despite some limitations. He highlighted the following areas requiring improvement for future response efforts:

- Standardization of treatment protocols
- Optimization of ambulance services
- Improvement of emergency supply distribution network
- Establishment of burns units
- Training of medical staff in emergency response
- Allocation of more funds for medical emergency response

5.2 Data Analysis and Report Writing Committee

A visit was made by the data analysis and report writing committee to obtain a first-hand feel of the accident site on 11th February 2022.



Figure 9: Data Analysis and Report Writing Committee Converged at Choithrams Supermarket, Wellington before Proceeding to Accident Site

The team visited the point at which the collision occurred and spoke to several eyewitnesses including 2 nearby fuel station managers and some business people in the vicinity of the site.

Eyewitnesses confirmed information previously obtained from incident reports previously reviewed, with all of them describing the mad rush which occurred following the crash, as people rushed to the scene to collect the fuel. They also described the fuel tanker driver's futile attempts to disperse the crowd by using a megaphone to announce that they should stay away due to the fire hazard posed by the situation. First-hand accounts from people consulted near the accident site, indicated that a motorbike rider had been the cause of the spark which caused the explosion. According to them, the motorbike rider skid to a stop near the accident scene, causing the motorbike stand to scrape on the asphalt, causing the spark.

A number of people reported having seen some of their relatives or friends engulfed in the flames which ensued, having identified the corpses of people they knew, or claimed that they knew of persons missing since the night of the accident.

Two filling stations were located within a radius of about 100m away from where the fire broke out, and according to the station managers, the stations had an estimated combined total of six thousand litres of fuel.



Figure 10: One of two Fuel Stations near accident Scene **Figure 11: Team with one of the Fuel Station Managers**

One station manager reported that having noticed the actions of members of the public to gain access to the fuel was a recipe for disaster, he closed his station and prevented public access to the facility. He concluded that barely fifteen minutes following the closure of the station, he heard a loud explosion, followed by a raging fire. It is safe to assume that the awareness of the fuel station managers and attendants of the hazards posed by the accident, and their decision to close the stations, in addition to other preventative actions taken by them, limited the extent of the disaster. The fire spreading to either of these stations would have resulted in an undeniably more catastrophic situation of unimaginable proportions or consequences.

6 FINDINGS

Consequent upon the examination of the secondary data (initial incident reports) provided by institutions, and primary data collected through questionnaires and investigation conducted with leaders of state and non-state actors on the Wellington fire disaster, the following are general findings on the circumstances surrounding the disaster catalogued for the attention of the Office of the President.

6.1 Cause(s) of the Disaster

The fire disaster was a sequel to the collision between a fuel tanker (AQB 602) loaded with 15,000 litres of petrol, which was negotiating its way into traffic in the direction of Calaba Town, and a tipper truck (AQM 928) loaded with granite stones that was travelling from Calaba Town towards Freetown along the main Bai Bureh Road (see figure 12). One school of thought is that the tipper truck may have lost control. Another explanation obtained from eyewitness accounts is that the truck had earlier violated a traffic regulation at Calaba Town and was driving at a high speed to escape the incident, resulting in the collision.

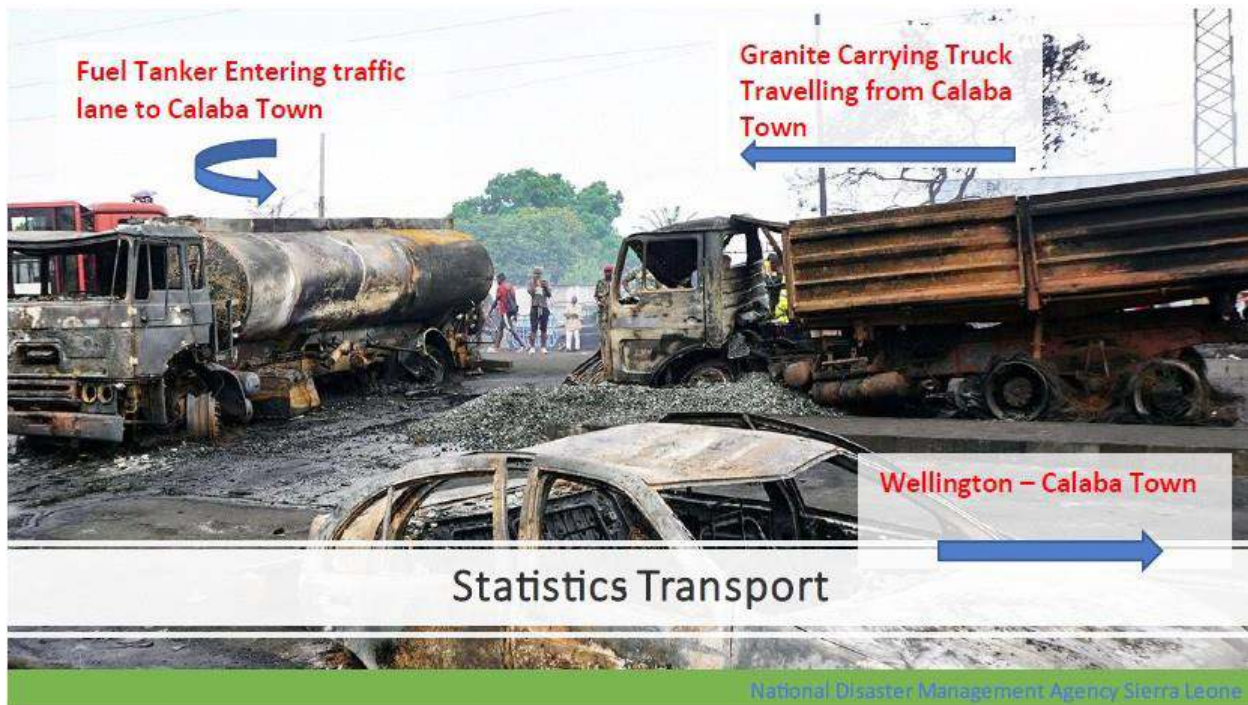


Figure 12: Accident Scene

The source of ignition was as a result of an individual's attempt to disconnect the battery from the tipper truck. The fire was exacerbated due to the fact that the fuel had been leaking from the tanker for about 42 minutes, and had spread over a wide area spanning the accident site, having leaked on to the road and into nearby gutters. The spillage of fuel in the surrounding environment due to bad handling by members of the public siphoning and hoarding the fuel in different locations, is a precipitating factor responsible for the wide spread of the fire resulting in the destruction of life and properties.

The behaviour of the general public following the collision was a major contributing factor to the scale of the incident, and is a serious cause for concern. At the outset of the accident, despite the tanker driver using a megaphone borrowed from a nearby seller, to advice the public to avoid the scene, he was reportedly insulted and his advice completely ignored by the individuals eager to access the fuel. This lawlessness on the part of the public is a major factor in the spread of the fire and extent of carnage and destruction.

6.2 Scale of the Disaster

Disaster data collection and analysis of casualties was done following the incident. Results indicate that a total of three hundred and ten (310) people were affected. One hundred and fifty-four (154) deceased were recorded (including those found dead on the scene and those who later died in hospital). Eighty-six (86) of the deceased could not be identified and sixty-nine (69) missing persons were reported.

Findings revealed that in addition to the fuel tanker and tipper truck, the following properties were affected by the fire:

- Two (2) dwelling houses
- Five (5) small shops
- Twenty (20) vehicles
- Forty-eight (48) motorbikes, and
- Three (3) motorized tricycles (kekes)

The following pictures depict the scale of the disaster:



Figure 13: Images depicting the wake of destruction left by the fire disaster

6.3 Effectiveness of actions by officers (SLRSA and SLP) deployed at the PMB Area following Collision

It has been determined that at the time of the accident, there were no SLRSA personnel (traffic corps) on the scene. Discussions with SLRSA revealed that their personnel are not mandated to be at their duty stations after 20:00 hrs due to safety concerns (poorly lit roads, increasing threat to personal safety from members of the public).

It was noted, however, that SLP personnel were stationed at the PMB junction roughly 100m from the accident scene (see figure 14).



Figure 14: Map showing Accident Site proximity to deployment of SLP Personnel

The proximity between PMB junction and the accident site is close enough for the SLP to have diverted vehicular and human traffic away from the accident. However, there is no indication that any action was taken before the explosion occurred.

There was an appreciable period of time between the collision, recorded by primary sources to be about 21:05 hrs, and the explosion which took place at about 21:47 hrs. This period could have been used by traffic management bodies like the SLP to call for reinforcement from the nearest deployment point to control the youths, Bike riders, Keke riders and other members of the public from entering what one will properly describe as Red Zone.

6.4 Capacity and Effectiveness of Institutions Responding to the Disaster

During the course of investigations, it was revealed that following the accident, NP (SL) Ltd released a team of trained personnel to attend to the BRV accident, with the aim of minimizing the hazard and preventing members of the public from accessing the fuel. They were however delayed in reaching the accident site due to the traffic jam, prior to the subsequent explosion.

The National Fire Force used four fire engines to extinguish the fire. The turnaround time of the fire engines was constrained as a result of the location of water sources (at Macdonald, near Waterloo and Kissy Fire Station, considerable distances from the site) during the response operation. This is considered a serious limitation to the turnaround time for effective response, resulting in NFF taking a longer time to overcome the blaze than if functional fire hydrants had been readily accessible near the accident site. It is worth noting that in 2006, there were reportedly 287 fire hydrants across Freetown. As of 2022, there are currently only 6 functional fire hydrants in the city. This limited number of hydrants for a modern city is seen as an anathema to effective response to fire disaster. The firefighters utilised safety equipment made available to NFF by the World Bank through the Office of National Security. Without the safety equipment the firefighters would have found it difficult and near impossible to fight a petroleum-based fire.

The following bullet points summarise key issues which were found to constrain the effectiveness of the response operation:

- During the initial incident response, the initial incident management displayed some weaknesses. A lack of immediate, or delayed cordoning of the scene by the police led to members of the public obtaining access to the fuel leaking from the tanker and is a key contributing factor to the circumstances facilitating the eventual explosion. In addition, the public's access to the accident site led to widespread close-up pictures of victims at the scene appearing on social media.
- Undue emphasis was placed by first responders on NDMA to arrive at the scene with resources for handling the disaster. This is indicative of some confusion as to the primary roles of responders or variations in interpretations of their key roles. NDMA hold no integral vehicles that could have been used to convey fatalities and injured victims to medical treatment centres or hospitals.
- In the days following the disaster, there were procedural challenges with the 'battle rhythm' of coordination meetings organised by NDMA and PHEOC. There were notable instances of often unintentional clashes of meetings that may have restricted the coordination of immediate action flows and contributed to some confusion and frustration among stakeholders. Inconsistent use of online platforms, such as Teams or Zoom, at coordination meetings, sometimes restricted opportunities for the participation of key stakeholders at coordination meetings especially when clashes took place.
- Crisis communication and data presentations sometimes contained inaccuracies or lack of acknowledgement of roles of key stakeholders that could have caused issues with trust and credibility. This may have been caused by poor information exchange in terms of strategic communication. This was identified as a potential single point of failure in the response.
- Delays have been experienced in the roll out of some response to victims. NDMA, NGOs and other GoSL partners assisting in the area of livelihood support etc. are on standby, awaiting official response from GoSL to proceed.
- NDMA generated a database of victims of the disaster in order to efficiently coordinate relief response. Response partners were encouraged to make use of this as the official database. This made it possible for partners like the SLRCS, CARITAS, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), World Vision SL, Save the Children, FCC and other partners to provide relief support, monitored by the Relief and Response Department of NDMA. However, inconsistency in the response operation occurred, with some response partners deviating from the established protocol of using data generated by NDMA and partners, and going directly to affected communities to administer aid. Some of these engagements were not orderly and thus posed some insecurities to the entire process. This in itself is a show of deviation from established channel agreed at the coordination meetings.
- As the first responders took the casualties to the hospitals for treatment, it was noted that the main Government Hospital (Connaught Hospital), which is the main referral hospital became quickly overwhelmed. Thus, some patients with severe burns were taken to 34 Military Hospital, Emergency Hospital and Choithrams Hospital.

- There was insufficient key equipment and medical supplies for burns casualties as none of the medical centres where victims were admitted had burns units for burn victims. This is reflective of the wider potential logistics single point of failure. In addition to this, there are only 2 plastic surgeons in the country, available to provide services for the numerous victims in need of reconstructive surgery. This in itself is a big gap in the provision of health facilities and treatment of burn victims. GoSL however received wide-ranging support from other countries (including United States of America, China, Israel, Senegal, Italy, European Union, Liberia, Thailand and India), in the area of medical supplies as well as food, financial aid and assorted items for the victims.
- Deficiencies in established Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) and Casualty Tracking processes led to time lags in identifying victims which then slowed distribution of aid and services to affected persons.
- It was noted that at the outset of the disaster, a number of victims and eyewitnesses went into hiding fearing that they would be charged with a crime and stand the risk of prosecution if found. This prevented some from going to receive medical attention. Thus, during response coordination meetings, it was agreed that the strategic communication pillar of the response develop messages and engage radio stations, television stations and conduct community engagement to allay their fears and encourage such individuals to come out of hiding and seek medical attention. This engagement yielded good result, with more people who had suffered slight burns and injuries, visiting Rokupa Satellite hospital for treatment.
- A contact-tracing team was established to locate all victims of the disaster, spanning the areas between Mountain Cut and Debia Water (close to Waterloo) where it was determined that most of the affected population resided (Annex D: Contact tracing form).

Contact Tracing Zones				
Enumerator Distribution				
Zone 1				
Mountain Cut - Ferry Junction				
NCRA - 1	SLRC - 3	FCC - 1	VSO - 1	FORUT - 1
CAPS - 1	NEAT - 1	CARITAS - 3		
Zone 2				
Ferry Junction - Grassfield				
NCRA - 1	SLRC - 4	FCC - 1	MoHS - 1	VSO - 1
MSW - 1	CAPS - 1	NEAT - 1	CARITAS - 1	
Zone 3				
Grassfield - Congo Water				
NCRA - 1	SLRC - 6	FCC - 1	MoHS - 1	VSO - 1
MSW - 1	CARITAS - 1	NEAT - 1	PIH - 2	
Zone 4				
Congo Water - Calaba Town				
NCRA - 1	SLRC - 4	AFO - 2	FCC - 1	VIONET - 1
MSW - 1	ONS - 1	MoHS - 1	NDMA - 3	Concern - 1
AAH - 1	PIH - 2	CARITAS - 1	NEAT - 1	
Zone 5				
Calaba Town - Hastings (Toll Gate)				
NCRA - 1	SLRC - 6	FCC - 1	MoHS - 1	NDMA - 2
VIONET - 1	ONS - 1	Concern - 1	CARITAS - 1	NEAT - 1
Zone 6				
Hastings (Toll) - Deep Eye Water				
NCRA - 1	SLRC - 1	FCC - 1	MoHS - 1	VIONET - 1
MSW - 1	Concern - 1	CARITAS - 1	NEAT - 1	
Zone 7				
Deep Eye Water - Newton				
NCRA - 1	SLRC - 1	FCC - 1	VIONET - 1	CARITAS - 1
AAH - 1	Concern - 1	NEAT - 1		

Figure 15: Contact Tracing Zones

This was established under the Registration Pillar during an Inter Pillar Coordination meeting to the response. Activities under this pillar include data collection, analysis, and interpretation through face-to-face engagement, telephone contact and other forms of verification of victims.

- The inability of authorities to locate the truck driver who allegedly ran away following the collision, and the owner of the truck, indicates that there is a deficiency in the effectiveness of existing databases of licenced and registered vehicles. This warrants speculation that the tipper truck was likely an illegal vehicle with fictitious registration details. It was later reported that the truck driver perished in the disaster.

6.5 Existence of Standard Operating Procedure to respond to National Disaster and Identification of any breach(es)

The Sierra Leone Incident Management System which is the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) was activated approximately forty (40) minutes following the explosion. Major incident management institutions including the leadership of first responders quickly mobilized to the disaster scene. They all executed their various responsibility by:

- Aggressively fighting the fire
- Conducting search and rescue operations
- Taking the wounded, burnt and traumatized to medical centres
- Ensuring effective strategic and operational coordination
- Provision of medical care for the affected population
- Cordoning the disaster scene on the following day
- Provision of effective communication through established structures
- Conduct of clean-up operations
- Opening of normal traffic to commuters and the entire public

Activation of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) helped in the fight against the blaze. This is evident by the fact that responders were able to successfully prevent the fire from spreading to nearby filling stations which had over six thousand litres (6,000) of petroleum product. The NFF was very productive here.

It is however observed that the traffic management bodies did not take proactive steps in diverting traffic at PMB junction to the Old Road, who were reported to be outnumbered by the crowd.

6.6 Compliance with Regulations on Fuel Transportation

Investigation into violation of the relevant regulation on fuel transportation showed that the Petroleum Regulatory Agency (PRA) and Leone Oil Company correctly observed and applied appropriate clauses in the regulation. Important to note however that most BRVs loaded with fuel product travel at night during which traffic management bodies should be informed, to ensure safety and security along carriage way. The need for policy regulation in view of the above cannot be over emphasized.

6.7 Insurance Status of Fuel Tanker and Best Practices for Insuring BRVs

Investigation into status of the insurance of the BRV involved in the accident revealed that it was insured by Medical and General Insurance Company (MAGIC). The policy that was in force on the said tanker at the time of the accident was a Third Party Motor Insurance Cover.

This is the least covered amongst the motor insurance policies. It does not cover the owner's vehicle but covers the legal liability to the third party resulting from an accident caused by the insured vehicle. This does not cover death or injury of the third parties. There is however a monetary limit to property damage caused by the insured vehicle.

What has however proved elusive is lack of information or data on the truck loaded with granite stones, which hit the fuel tanker. No information has been obtained on ownership of the truck. Additional work needs to be done by SLP to assist the PRA, SLRSA and Insurance Companies to obtain accurate data of the truck; this will help determine its insurance status.

6.8 Evaluation of GoSL response to the victims of the disaster

Following the disaster, GoSL declared a 3-day period (November 6th, 7th and 8th 2021) of national mourning, with the national flag lowered at half-mast.

Due to the number of deceased victims and limited handling capacity at the hospitals, deterioration of the corpses occurred rapidly, requiring immediate action for burial. The GoSL, supported by the medical sector, quickly organised the burial of eighty-six (86) unidentified remains in Bolima, near Waterloo.



Figure 16: Burial of Deceased Victims at Bolima

The solemn burial ceremony was attended by national and international representatives, with H.E. the President as Chief Mourner.

In line with the promise made by H.E. the President, burn victims of the accident through the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, are being provided with free medical care and medication, and are not required to pay for any medical service while admitted or as outpatients. In addition, special food for burn victims was provided by the government through the Food and Nutrition Directorate of MoHS to all admitted victims.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

This section discusses the recommendations deemed necessary by the Task Force to prevent similar incidents in the future, or at a minimum, lessen the scale of disaster if an incident of this nature occurs.

7.1 General Recommendations

1. The fire disaster occurred following the collision between the fuel tanker and the tipper truck, over half an hour before the violent explosion. There was poor communication between security services and the Petroleum Regulatory Agency that has responsibility for the regulating oil marketing companies. The need to enhance effective communication among all players in the Sierra Leone Incident Management System cannot be over emphasized.
2. The youths and other members of the public that were involved in scooping of the petroleum product were not aware of the enormity of the hazard posed by their actions. When they were advised to stay away from the scene, most interpreted it as an act of deprivation, due to lawlessness. Thus, there is an urgent need to provide sufficient sensitization to the public on the dangers of petroleum products.
3. Most Government and Non-government infrastructure have failed to call upon the National Fire Force to conduct comprehensive fire assessment of their office establishment and in some instances those that have done so have failed to take on board recommendation made. Thus, it is strongly recommended that all state institutions and other Non – Government establishment should by law allow the National Fire Force to conduct fire assessment and adopt recommendations proffered.
4. It is noted that the National Fire Force has developed a fire safety bill for the country. Slow pace in the approval of this bill is causing lots of challenges for incident management institutions. Thus, it is strongly recommended that the Ministry of Internal Affairs expeditiously initiate engagement with Cabinet and Parliament on the afore said bill. This will give the National Fire Force the leverage to ensure constructive engagement on fire prevention countrywide.

7.2 Institutional Recommendations

7.2.1 National Fire Force

1. A draft Fire Safety Bill and Policy has been developed in the past addressing key issues relating to capacitating the NFF and ensuring the safety of the public from fire disasters. It is recommended that the bill and policy are enacted expeditiously.
2. The National Fire Force is constrained by very limited number of firefighters (less than 400 firefighters and 19 fire engines countrywide). The force has insufficient personnel, engines, equipment, and chemicals to respond to fire incidents countrywide. Vehicles and equipment available for firefighting, search and rescue operations fall short of the number required to effectively and efficiently discharge the duty of saving lives and property under threat from fire. The force is therefore faced with a daunting national task to respond to emergencies with very limited capacity and capability.

3. One of the issues noted in combating the Wellington Fire Disaster was the absence of sufficient working fire hydrants in the city. This constrained the turnaround time of fire engines which had to travel some distance from the fire scene to refill. It is recommended that an evaluation of the number of working hydrants is conducted, followed by the determination of key areas within the city where hydrants ought to be stationed. Installation of new hydrants in the new areas identified, should be accompanied by protective measures and community consultations to ensure that communities understand the importance of the hydrants to prevent tampering and damage to them.
4. In a world where terrorism and other natural disasters are becoming phenomenon close to our doors in the Sahel Region, the fire service needs to reposition itself for new and unwanted challenges. Terrorist incidents, the emerging trend of civil disturbance resulting in arson on government and non-government assets to settle grievances, and other natural disasters create a unique environment in which emergency response management is tested to the fullest. It is recommended that the Fire Training School is fully developed. NFF human resource capacity needs to be developed with personnel regularly trained in the latest firefighting techniques, use of the latest firefighting tools and equipment, disaster risk management, search and rescue methods and incident response methods for various scenarios.
5. It is noted that GoSL is making frantic effort to extend fire service infrastructure in the provinces. In 2021 Government approved budget for the construction of three more fire stations in the provinces. It is critical that the capability of NFF is extended countrywide enabling the same level and efficiency of response to fire incidents in any area of the country – this will only be made possible with the introduction of new infrastructure, equipment and well-trained firefighting personnel across the country.
6. A medical unit should be established which can accommodate NFF personnel.
7. NFF should be informed on the movement of BRVs travelling with petroleum products countrywide. PRA should make it mandatory for all OMCs to inform NFF on the movement of BRVs travelling with petroleum product nationwide.

7.2.2 Sierra Leone Police

1. A specialized unit should be established within SLP, trained in first response techniques in fire-fighting in the case of emergencies. This will help limit the spread of fires, and boost the human resource base of the National Fire Force.
2. A central communication system, not dependent on mobile phones, needs to be established for sharing of information within the force and among related stakeholders in the case of an emergency. This will improve on response times.
3. The logistical capacity of the SLP needs to be improved upon in terms of equipment – operational vehicles, ambulances, communications tools.
4. A committee should be formed including all stakeholders in disaster management to develop standard operating procedures for responding to petroleum fires, particularly geared towards tanker drivers and other commuters of the road.

5. The movement of BRVs should be restricted to hours during which there is minimal traffic, preferably late at night/ early hours of the morning.
6. SLP in collaboration with Ministry of Water Resources should be informed about locations on hydrants in and around the city for possible security reasons.
7. The Ministry of Transport and Aviation should expedite the implementation of the Sierra Leone Integrated Resilient Urban Mobility Project, which establishes security measures and features, such as clearing all rights-of-way and footpaths, installing road safety signage, etc.
8. A Command-and-Control Centre (CCC) should be set up for road safety and incident management. Such a centre should be equipped with state-of-the-art communications tools, managements systems and skilled personnel.

7.2.3 National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA)

1. There is need for improved incident response training and familiarity including cordoning practices for police and responders; this is considered cardinal for implementation of an effective coordination mechanism.
2. The provision of transportation and other logistical facilities to enhance the effectiveness of the service delivery effort of NDMA in all phases of disaster is considered cardinal.
3. The NDMA in consultation with the relevant stakeholders should be organizing regular simulation drills to improve the preparedness and response capability of various agencies to disasters.
4. There is need for stronger inter-agency and inter-ministerial leadership, coordination and information exchange between NDMA and MoHS, and establishment of clear lead agency according to specific hazards. This is important given the fact that the incident was a fire disaster with serious medical implications for the affected population.
5. Use of online platforms like Teams and Zoom at coordination meetings needs to be improved, so that stakeholders not able to attend physical meetings can participate remotely. This emphasizes the need to improve on the provision of internet facility at the NDMA coordination.
6. Information exchange and preparation of messaging strategies need to be tightened up prior to dissemination of crisis communication to the public, to provide accuracy and clarity of information disseminated.
7. There is a requirement for further Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) investment and public engagement in Freetown on fire hazards relating to road traffic accidents, and particularly fuel tanker accidents.
8. The establishment of Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) and Casualty Tracking procedures to enhance speed and coordination of required actions needs to be revisited.
9. NDMA should consider the inclusion of the Ministry of Water Resources as a key stakeholder in disaster management coordination.

7.2.4 Petroleum Regulatory Agency

1. Oil Marketing Companies terminals should ensure that all BRVs are loaded before sunset daily. BRVs loaded close to sunset should not be dispatched until sunrise.
2. OMCs should establish vulcanizing service within terminals for BRVs, where all BRVs should be checked and serviced before dispatch.
3. BRVs should be covered by Comprehensive Insurance Policies instead of third-party cover, as a prerequisite to being contracted for transportation of fuel.
4. Regular and widespread public sensitization (radio talk shows, jingles, etc.) should be conducted in all local languages on the danger of unsafe approach or interference with petroleum products, especially where there is spillage.
5. Regular refresher training on response to petroleum spills and leaks should be conducted for sector personnel and national security operators.
6. A toll-free line should be established to report all threats, emergencies and disaster occurrence across the country.
7. Emergency response management plan should be incorporated into the PRA's mandate.

7.2.5 Motor Drivers and General Transport Workers Union (MD & GTWU)

1. Article twenty-one (21) of the Constitution of MD>WU clearly states that (b) trucks, (d) tippers and (f) tankers etc. are under the Union's purview. There is therefore the need for the Union to exercise its responsibility to its membership by protecting and promoting individual as well as collective interests.
2. Existing regulations concerning the transportation of petroleum products – in particular the Statutory Instrument of 2016 regarding the downstream petroleum regulations in Sierra Leone (part vi, (a) 2,3,4,5,7 and 8) – need to be enforced.
3. All drivers and apprentices of fuel tankers transporting petroleum product around the country, need to be registered with and become members of the Union.
4. The safety, concentration and job security of fuel tanker drivers and their apprentices need to be improved by securing the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) for their terms and conditions of services.

This agreement is reached between the fuel tanker owners/management, and MD>WU which represents the workers, under the supervision of the Registrar of the Trades Union. The CBA is a requirement of the Regulations of Wages, and the Industrial Regulations Act of 1971.

5. The Union should be empowered to collaborate with other stakeholders for the provision of regular training, workshops and refresher courses for fuel tanker drivers and apprentices, in topics including safety management, use of fire extinguishers and other firefighting equipment.

6. The MD>WU and institutions/stakeholders which the Union is in collaboration with, should submit periodic reports (as by policy) on their activities and level of communication, collaboration and networking within and / or among themselves.
7. Secretariats of the Union in strategic locations should be equipped with communications tools, with training and refresher courses conducted for personnel regularly.
8. Community engagement should occur, particularly in communities bordering roads and highways, on appropriate first response measures to apply in the event of road accidents, dos and don'ts of handling accident victims, identifying hazardous situations following road accidents, etc. A hotline should be established and made known to the public for reporting incidents or accidents.
9. A Petroleum Product BRV Safety and Accident Committee should be set up comprising NDMA, ONS, SLP, NFF, MoHS, PRA, MD>WU, SLRSA, Civil Society Organizations, Insurance Companies and Oil Marketing Companies.

7.2.6 Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority

The following are institutional recommendations that will enhance the effective operations of SLRSA in disaster management:

1. SLRSA as non-subsided institution should be placed on the national budget.
2. Central government, through the Ministry of Transport and Aviation, should effectively regulate road safety activities.
3. Logistical support such as light and heavy-duty tow trucks, vehicles and bikes should be provided.
4. There is need to increase the number of Road Safety Corps.
5. Road Safety Corps should be trained in first aid and basic medical care.
6. Road side clinics should be established to address post-crash response.
7. Policy frame work on the movement of vehicles with dangerous and hazardous goods should be formulated and implemented.
8. Designated areas should be identified for parking of vehicles with dangerous goods.
9. All heavy-duty fuel tankers should have illuminated direction indicators to clearly show the width and length of the vehicle at night.
10. SLRSA should be given access to participate in road safety treaties and conventions. This will enhance effective collaboration with others road safety organizations.
11. Scrap and stationary vehicles along critical areas of the highway should be removed or a flash of about 100m given to indicate their presence.
12. All BRVs should be certified as road worthy, and fitted with GPS so that they can be tracked remotely and easily located when necessary.

7.2.7 Ministry of Health and Sanitation

1. The need for a burns unit in the overall arrangement of our national health management system cannot be over emphasized.
2. Recruitment and training of burns specialists needs to be done. At the time of the fire incident MoHS had only two plastic surgeons. This is grossly inadequate for a population of roughly 7.2 million people. It is thus recommended that specialists be trained in the treatment of burns and reconstructive surgery.
3. The establishment of a burns unit and training of personnel to treat burns patient should be associated with provision of necessary drugs and equipment. Thus, special arrangements should be put in place for the provision of much needed equipment to support the unit.
4. The National Emergency Management Service (NEMS) of the Ministry of Health and Sanitation should be provided with specialized ambulances to be used in transporting burn victims to medical centres for treatment.
5. The Department of Nutrition of the MoHS should be strengthened in terms of material and logistical support to take care of burn victims.
6. A special communication channel should be established in the office of the incident Manager at MoHS to easily communicate issues of fire disaster.

7.2.8 Sierra Leone Insurance Commission

1. Since this was a national disaster, Government should consider the setting up of a national Pool of insurance companies that can address the risks. No one Insurance Company can underwrite the kind of losses that emanated from the Wellington Tanker disaster. Every insurance company will be required to subscribe to the Pool and the Pool itself will purchase reinsurance cover.
2. Movement of Bulk Road Vehicle(BRVs) should be restricted to off peak period when most commuters of the road are at home and should be accompanied by escort especially when passing through built up areas.

8 CONCLUSIONS

The Wellington fire incident is among the biggest fire disasters in living memory, to have occurred in Freetown. The city has suffered a number of fire incidences in recent years but the scale of the Wellington petrol tanker disaster under investigation is classed to be among the worst. In addition to the destruction of lives and properties, the incident sent a shock wave through the minds of people around the world.

Following the damages caused by the fire, it was apparent that unlike other common fire disasters that affect the city, the incident being a fuel fire, provided room for inter-sectoral collaboration of various players in the equation to coordinate an effective response.

The level of cooperation and collaboration exhibited by the various institutions involved in the response in terms of coordination – e.g. between MoHS, NDMA, NFF etc, - given the numerous limitations is worth commending.

As His Excellency the President constituted a multi stakeholder task force to examine the veracity of causes, effects, and management of the entire response, it is worth noting that views in this report together with findings and recommendations will be the beacon of hope for a complete change in terms of approach and strategies by emergency management institutions in the country.

It is fervently hoped that one critical turn around point in the entire emergency management establishment in the country is the provision of knowledge to the public on dangers associated with industrial products in BRVs/fuel tankers that ply the carriage-way in the country.

APPENDICES

Annex A: Members of The Presidential Task Force

1. Lt. General (Rtd.) Brima Sesay – Chairman/ Director General NDMA
2. Dr. Ambrose Sovula - Inspector General of Police
3. Nazir Ahmed A. Kamanda Bongay - Chief Fire Officer
4. Robert Baoma Kowa Esq. - Solicitor General
5. Baluwa Koroma - Petroleum Regulatory Agency
6. Rev. Smart Kelson Senesie - Executive Director, Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority
7. Arthur Yaskey - Sierra Leone Insurance Commission.
8. Sally N. Adams - Representative, Civil Society Organisations
9. Alpha Amadu Bah - President, Motor Drivers and General Transport Workers Union
10. Umaru Talie Bah - President, Sierra Leone Commercial Bike Riders Union
11. Cllr Arthur Shekie Mansaray - Representative, Freetown City Council
12. Reginald Sawyer - Representative, Oil Marketing Companies
13. Vanessa James - Mechanical and Environmental Engineer
14. Mustapha Sundifu Kabba – Incident Manager, Ministry of Health and Sanitation
15. Kpawuru Sandy – Secretary General, Sierra Leone Red Cross Society

Annex B: List of Subcommittee Members

Data Analyses and Report Writing

1. John Vandy Rogers – Deputy Director General NDMA
2. Vanessa James – CEMMATS Group Ltd
3. Michael Jaigah – Road Safety Authority
4. Sally N. Adams – Representative Civil Society Organisations
5. Kaiinnamu A. N. Z. Kumabeh II – Motor Drivers and General Transport Workers Union
6. Dr Muctarr Jalloh – Ministry of Health and Sanitation
7. Sinneh Mansaray (Esq.) – Director of Relief and Response, NDMA
8. Theresa Dolores – Deputy Director of Disaster Risk and Response Preparedness, NDMA
9. Jeredine Francess Jimmy-Kanje – Women's Forum

Investigative Committee

1. Councillor Arthur Shekie Mansaray – Freetown City Council
2. Abdulai Sesay – Freetown City Council
3. Abdulai Gassama Bockarie – National Fire Force
4. Bintu Fatmata Kamara (Esq.) – National Fire Force
5. Augustine Kaitongi – Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority
6. PC Ibrahim Sorie Kamara – Sierra Leone Police
7. CSP Fallah Joseph Mbayo – Sierra Leone Police
8. DSP Lamin Conteh – Sierra Leone Police
9. PC Ibrahim Kamara – Sierra Leone Police
10. Ahmed J. Jalloh – Petroleum Regulatory Agency
11. Francess Vandí – Petroleum Regulatory Agency

Annex C: Questionnaires

THE SIERRA LEONE POLICE FORCE QUESTIONNAIRE IN RESPECT OF THE WELLINGTON FIRE INCIDENT

1. How do you deploy your personnel within your jurisdiction?
.....
.....
2. How many personnel did you deploy at major intercession points?
.....
.....
3. What is the role of the traffic personnel at their duty points?
.....
.....
4. In the event of fire accident, is traffic or the Police in general prepared by training or equipment to respond to fire incident?
.....
.....
5. The Wellington fire incident of the 5th December, 2021 occurred within your operational area, were any traffic or general duty personnel deployed at the location at the time of the incident?
.....
.....
6. How did you get information about the Wellington fire incident?
.....
.....
7. How did you as a Police Officer respond to the Wellington fire incident?
.....
.....
8. What role or roles did each of the following play at the scene of the Wellington fire incident?
I. Traffic Police:

II. General Duty:

III. CID:

IV. INTELLIGENCE UNIT:

-
-
9. Are the Police actually equipped to adequately respond to fire incident?
-
-
10. How quickly did the Police respond to the Wellington fire incident?
-
-
11. How did the Police control crowd during the Wellington fire incident?
-
-
12. How did the Police protect the properties of victims of the Wellington fire incident?
-
-
13. How did the Police treat victims of the Wellington fire incident?
-
-
14. Did the Police coordinate with other agencies during the Wellington fire incident?
-
-
15. Which agency or organization did you think the Police coordinate with?
-
-
16. How did the Police share the information to the other agencies?
-
-
17. What was the role played by the said agencies?
-
-
18. What role did the Police play during fire incident that ensured less damage at the scene?
-
-

NATIONAL FIRE FORCE

1. Was the National Fire Force informed about the fire disaster?

.....

.....

2. How were they informed?

.....

.....

3. How long did it take the NFF to respond to the incident?

.....

.....

4. How many fire engines were in attendance?

.....

.....

5. How long did it take the National Fire Force to put out the Fire?

.....

.....

6. Were there enough firefighters at the scene?

.....

.....

7. How long did the National Fire Force operations last?

.....

.....

8. Are you aware of any toll-free lines for the National Fire Force?

.....

.....

9. What is the role played by the community to help the NFF to extinguish the fire?

.....

.....

10. What challenges did you face in responding to the fire disaster?

.....

.....

11. How do you plan to overcome these challenges?

.....

.....

NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT AGENCY (NDMA)

1. How did you get to know about the petrol tanker fire disaster at PMB?

.....
.....

2. What is your mandate in terms of emergency management in the country

.....
.....

3. What was the role played by the National Disaster management during the fire disaster?

.....
.....

4. What level of coordination did you put into the response to ensure effectiveness and efficiency?

.....
.....

5. What capacity gap did you experience on the part of NDMA that hindered the response?

.....
.....

6. What do you think you did that was not done well and needs improvement?

.....
.....

7. What level of communication exist between NDMA and other agencies in respect of the response?

.....
.....

8. How supportive were partners in terms of making the response effective and efficient?

.....
.....

9. How do you intend to prevent the occurrence of such incident in future?

.....
.....

10. What lesson(s) have you learnt from this incident?

.....
.....

PETROLEUM REGULATORY AGENCY/ OIL MARKETING COMPANY

1. Who regulates Petrol industry in Sierra Leone?

.....
.....

2. Are you aware of any law on the movement of dangerous and hazardous goods on the road?

.....
.....

3. Who enforces the law?

.....
.....

4. Do you know that petroleum products are dangerous?

.....
.....

5. What do you think is the best time for the movement of vehicles with petroleum products?

.....
.....

6. What do you think was the cause of the fire?

.....
.....

THE SIERRA LEONE ROAD SAFETY AUTHORITY INSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS ON THE WELLINGTON FIRE INCIDENT

1. Was the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority informed about the fire incident?

.....

.....

2. Was Sierra Leone Road Safety Corp deployed at the scene of the fire incident at that time?

.....

.....

3. What was the role played by the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority on the day of the incident?

.....

.....

4. Did the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority have any robust vehicle test?

.....

.....

5. Was there any alternative traffic management system put in place by the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority?

.....

.....

6. Did the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority have any operational equipment to clear obstruction after the scene of fire?

.....

.....

7. What was the time of the Sierra Leone Safety Authority intervention at the scene of the fire incident?.

.....

.....

8. Does the Sierra Leone Safety Authority have institutional mandate to response to fire incident?

.....

.....

9. What was the expected time of the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority intervention at the scene of the fire incident?

.....

.....

10. Were the two accident vehicles test driven by the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority to ascertain the cause of the accident?

.....

.....

11. Was there any witness during the examination of the two accident vehicles?

.....

.....

12. How did the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority get to know about the fire incident?

.....

.....

13. Which department of the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority played active role at the scene of the fire incident?

.....

.....

14. Is the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority trained to respond to fire incident?

.....

.....

15. During the fire incident, vehicles, tricycles and motor cycles were burnt. Is it possible to get information about the ownership of these vehicles from the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority?

.....

.....

16. What is the registration number of the two accident vehicles?

.....

.....

17. What were the equipment/ resources used by the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority at the scene?

.....

.....

18. How many of the following were towed from the fire incident?

(a) Vehicles (b) Tricycles (c) Motor Cycles

OIL MARKETING COMPANY QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE WELLINGTON FIRE INCIDENT.

1. Do you have Standard Operative Procedure (SOP) for emergency (road accident and spillage)?

Yes. No.

2. If yes, was it implemented during the Wellington fire incident?

.....

.....

3. What form of insurance policy do you operate for Bulk Road Vehicle (BRV)?

.....

.....

4. How capable is your company to handle Petroleum Products emergencies (Fire, Spillage and Accident)?

.....

.....

5. Is there any Policy on transportation of dangerous goods (TDG)?

.....

.....

6. How are your operations monitored by your Regulators?

.....

.....

7. What form of Public awareness creation regarding Petroleum handling does your company engaged in?

.....

.....

8. What modalities have you put in place to avoid similar incident like Wellington fire accident?

.....

.....

THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SANITATION QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE WELLINGTON FIRE INCIDENT

1. When did the Ministry of Health and Sanitation get to know about the Wellington fire incident?

.....

.....

2. When did the Ministry of Health and Sanitation arrived at the scene of the Wellington fire incident?

.....

.....

3. Do the Ministry of Health and Sanitation have specified unit to handle such incident?

.....

.....

4. Is the Public aware of the existence of that unit?

.....

.....

5. How were victims of the Wellington fire incident conveyed to the hospitals?

.....

.....

6. How many Ambulances were provided for the Wellington fire incident?

.....

.....

7. Were the available Ambulances enough for the operation?

.....

.....

8. Were the Hospitals equipped to handle such emergency?

.....

.....

9. What were the constraints the Ministry of Health and Sanitation experienced during the Wellington fire incident?.

.....

.....

Annex E

NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT AGENCY

REPORT ON THE WELLINGTON

FIRE INCIDENT



THE WELLINGTON FIRE DISASTER - FROM RESPONSE THROUGH FAMILY CONTACT TRACING UNTO RELIEF



The Wellington Fire Incident which occurred on the 5th November, 2021 was a major test for the newly established National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) and its partners. The incident occurred between 2100 and 2200 hours when a fuel tanker NP (SL Limited) with vehicle registration number AQB 602 loaded with 15,000 litters of petrol collided with a tipper truck with vehicle registration number AQM 928 transporting granite stones on the Wellington PMB Highway. Reports indicated that the 15,000 litters of petrol collected from Leonoil Terminal, Kissy, Freetown was to be delivered to Kalinda Sympathizer Enterprise Gas Station in Bo.

It was also reported that after the collision, fuel started leaking from the tanker which members of the public (mainly motorbike riders and taxi drivers) rushed to scoop. In the process, the loaded fuel tanker exploded leading to the death of many people, with the degree of burns ranging from severe to acute extensive burns. Some affected persons, sustained major injuries while others had minor injuries. Some of the burnt affected persons were admitted at the Connaught, Rokupa, Choithram, Emergency and 34 Military Hospitals.

Immediately after the incident, the National Disaster Management Agency together with other station institutions were spot-on in the coordination and management of the incident. It worked assiduously with the National Fire Force (NFF), Sierra Leone Ports Authority (SLPA), the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), the National Emergency Management Services (NEMS), Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) and Community Volunteers to put out the fire and recover dead bodies in the process.

At that material time, the team successfully convened 84 fatalities and transported 99 affected persons with severe acute burns to the aforesaid hospitals. Local and international media were also on site to give first-hand information on the incident.

On the second day, NDMA activated its Incident Management System (Response Structure) by coordinating partners through scheduled inter-pillar meetings held every other day. The National Situation Room was stood up, the Incident Command Centre established and an Incident Manager appointed. As the response scaled down so did the interpillar meetings.

Press releases were issued to keep the public abreast with developments and the community was engaged through Citizens and Tumac Radio Stations. The National Emergency Relief Fund bank accounts (leones and dollars) held with the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank were popularised for possible cash donations.

The epicentre was cleaned up with support from partners to avoid disease outbreak. The Hon. Vice President visited Connaught and 34 Military Hospitals early that morning to get first hand information on the severity of the incident. The Hon. Vice President and other top government officials also visited the area and sympathised with the affected families the following morning.

His Excellency (HE) the President who was on working visits overseas cancelled his trip and returned home to sympathise and provide leadership for the management of the disaster. The following day, the President visited the Incident Command Centre and the epicentre at Wellington where he was comprehensively briefed by the Director General, National Disaster Management Agency. HE sympathised with all those impacted and assured them that they would receive free adequate medical treatment. He also informed the country that an investigation would be mounted to establish the cause of the fire accident.

THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SANITATION (MoHS)

The role of the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS) cannot be overstated during this response. The reason being that the incident was medically weighted as a result of serious Health Implications, Safe Burial Arrangements, Line Listing and Case Management. On the 6th November, 2021, the Ministry of Health and Sanitation summoned an emergency meeting of their partners to plan health response and mobilize supports in a coordinated manner.

In that meeting, MoHS mapped out available resources, identified gaps, needs and potential consequences from the incident. They also mobilized immediate needs for trauma care, and coordination of health sector partners among others. They then deployed medical and psychosocial support teams to care for the injured, including clinical staff and surgeons as support to the main referral hospital.

The Public Health National Emergency Operations Centre (PHNEOC) was activated to level two (2) to coordinate the public health component of disaster response. The Incident Management Team was established with an Incident Manager.

Daily Incident Management Meetings were held to update on the following: Coordination, Surveillance, Laboratory, Pathology, Case Management & Infection Prevention and Control (IPC), Safe Burials, Food & Nutrition, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, Risk Communication and Community Engagement, Medical Logistics, Challenges/Gaps and Recommendations.

STATISTICAL DATA FROM MoHS AS AT 20th DECEMBER 2021

Based on data received from MoHS as of 20th December 2021, 304 affected persons have been reported thus far. A total of 158 Patients were received in the following categories:

No new death		Total number of deaths =153	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Connaught Hospital = 0 o Emergency Hospital = 0 o Choithram Hospital = 0 o 34 Military Hospital = 0 o Rokupa Hospital = 0 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Deaths on arrival in the Hospital: 87 o Deaths in hospital Hospitals: 66 	
Current Admission in City Hospitals=21		Patients in critical condition=2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Connaught Hospital = 9 o Emergency Hospital = 5 o Choithram Hospital = 0 o 34 Military Hospital = 6 o Rokupa Hospital = 1 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Connaught Hospital = 2 o Choithram Hospital = 0 o 34 Military Hospital = 0 o Rokupa Hospital = 0 o Emergency Hospital = 0 o Emergency hospital = 1 	
Total Discharges (requiring outpatient care): 72		No new admission	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Connaught Hospital = 50 o Emergency Hospital = 8 o Choithram Hospital = 1 o 34 Military Hospital = 4 o Rokupa Hospital = 9 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Connaught Hospital = 0 o Choithram Hospital = 0 o 34 Military Hospital = 0 o Rokupa Hospital = 1 o Emergency Hospital = 0 	

BURIALS

Before commencing the burials, the MoHS drafted protocol on dead bodies management and identification in emergencies. Tissue samples were collected, and they coordinated with laboratory to make room for future DNA testing and post-mortem identification of the affected population. On the 8th November, 2021, seventy-five (75) unrecognized bodies were buried by government. Eleven [11] previously identifiable who later became unidentifiable due to decomposition were buried on the 18th December, 2021. All burials took place at Bolima Burial Site in Waterloo – the site where Ebola and Landslide affected persons were buried. An Inter-Faith (Muslim and Christian) service where President Bio served as the chief mourner was held for them.



THE WELLINGTON FAMILY CONTACT TRACING [FCT]

The Family Contacting Tracing (FCT) was established under the “Registration Pillar” in the Inter-Pillar Coordinating Group Meeting. Its activities included data collection/entry, initiating face-to-face and telephone contacts, and other forms of verifications to include information from collateral sources such as Chiefs, Councillors and well-placed persons in the communities. The FCT retired on Monday 22nd November, 2021. It is key to note that amongst others, the National Civil Registration Authority (NaCRA) was part and parcel of the verification process as they are the pillar lead for registration.



FINAL PRESENTATION ON DATA

The Technical Team presented its final disaggregated Data as follows:

STATISTICS - HUMAN

Status	Number Affected	Comments
Overall	310	Pre-verified
Deceased	121	At scene/ in hospital
Missing	69	Various reasons
Admitted	59	Status at time of data entry
Discharged	50	Status at time of data entry
Non-admitted	11	Injured but did not present at hospital

STATISTICS - LIVLIHOOD

Type	Number Affected	Comment
House	3	Dwelling
Shop	5	Mixed small container and makeshift tire shops

RECOMMENDED SUPPORT TO WELLINGTON AFFECTED PERSONS

ITEM	QUANTITY
Cash Transfer	310 (All affected persons/Next of Kin)
Motor Bikes	48
Tri-cycles [Keke]	3
Rice (50Kg)	310
Vegetable Oil (10 Liters)	310
Salt	310
Sugar	310
Tomato paste	310

PARTNERS CONTRIBUTIONS

1. FCC via SLMDA

- 1,200,000.00 SLL to all Affected Person (310)

2. SLRCS

- 1,675,000.00 SLL each
- 224 Affected Persons
- Most vulnerable categories

Status: Ongoing

3. Partners in Health

- 750,000.00 SLL per month for 6 months for 90 Affected Persons
- Transportation support to affected (approx.. 120)
- Equitable and prioritized/ criteria approach
- Psychosocial Support through Community Health Workers

4. Concern Sierra Leone

- 3,000,000.00 SLL direct cash transfer to families (65 related to deceased in hospital/ burial)

5. Handicap International

- Transportation support- Wellington to Rakupa Hospital- 6 months, 30,000.00 SLL
- Waterloo- Rakupa 60,000.00 SLL- 6 months
- Newton- Rakupa 70,000.00 SLL
- Kissy- Rakupa, 20,000.00 SLL
- Hastings- 40,000.00 SLL
- Hygiene Kits to all survivors one-off package for three months (91 Affected Persons)
- Mobility assistance devices

Status: Ongoing

6. Actionaid Sierra Leone

- Food items
- 20 bags of 50kgs rice
- 1 gallon veg oil x 20
- 10 cartons of sardines
- 10 cartons of mayonnaise
- 10 cartons of powdered milk/ sugar
- 10 cartons of Ovaltine
- Other provisions

Action Aid Cont.

- Water x 40 crates
- Ensure Plus x 120 packs

Non Food Items

- Hygiene kits x 40
- Kitchen sets x 40
- Support to Coordination 500 litres of fuel

Status: Pending**7. SLPP North America Region:**

- 10 Motor Bikes

Status: pending registration and distribution**8. Caritas Freetown/CRS**

- 2,640,000.00 SLL each
- 184 Affected Persons

Status: Pending**9. World Vision**

- 1,000,000.00 SLL each
- 70 Affected Persons

Status: 42 completed and 28 ongoing**10. Kono District Diaspora****Represented by Mamadi O Jalloh and Issa Barrie**

- 1,000,000.00 SLL each
- 42 Affected Persons (Discharged, Missing and Widows)

Status: Pending

CONCLUSION

The National Disaster Management Agency was able to ensure effective coordination of the entire incident using established and accepted response structures. The response was a litmus test to determine future preparedness of state and non-state actors that are involved in national emergency response activities. It also served as an assessment tool that proof-tested the capability of instruments and plan of action of the National Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery Plans.

The response was not without short-comings. It depicted challenges associated with the right equipment in terms of managing industrial fire like the one under discussion; the seemingly slow pace of inter-operability among stakeholders and the inadequate trained human resource to address such and similar large-scale fire[s]. However, it is the responsibility and priority of the NDMA through adequate coordination with support from government, to ensure that structured help is accorded to the affected, identified and registered persons of disasters.

One of the recommendations for the attention of authorities is in line with a point made by His Excellency the President on the establishment of a Presidential Task Force to thoroughly investigate the circumstances surrounding the Wellington Petrol Tanker Fire Disaster and proffer recommendations for the attention of all dealing with emergency management in the country. This will be directed towards capacity building of state institutions prompted towards dealing with disasters of larger magnitude/s.

In line with the foregoing, it is strongly recommended that donations made whether cash or kind be directed to the affected population as effective response to all the fire disaster affected persons.

ANNEX F



NATIONAL FIRE FORCE

EMERGENCY LINES:

(Freetown- 300) (Kissy-301) (Aberdeen-302)
(Bo-303) (Makeni -304) (Kono-305) (Kambia-306) (Moyamba-307) (Kenema 308)

From: The Chief Fire Officer,

To: The Chairmen and Honorable members the Committees of
Internal Affairs and Transport.

Parliament of the Republic of Sierra Leone

Freetown Sierra Leone.

Attn: Mary Kawa, clerk Committee of Internal Affairs.

Date: 6th November 2021

FIRE INCIDENT REPORT AT THE PMB/OLD WHARF JUNCTION WELLINGTON

INTRODUCTION:

On Friday the 5th November 2021, at approximately 21:34Hrs, a running called was made by a police officer P.C 14957. Ibrahim Kamara reporting an outbreak of fire on a Tanker loaded with Petroleum Products and a Benz Truck loaded with granite stone. Immediately, the First Pump (Fire Engine) in line of Fire Defense from the Kissy Fire station left for the scene. Upon arrival at approximate 21:47Hrs, the Firefighters (crew) noticed that the fire has completely engulfed both the Tanker and the Truck. They also noticed that vehicles, motor bikes, tricycles and two container houses were on fire. The conflagration was so high that the crew immediately started its operation to extinguish the fire but the rate at which the fire was blazing led the Firefighters to call for additional Fire Engines from the Headquarters Fire Station and Sima Town Fire Station. With the backups from both stations, we offensively attacked the fire to avoid its spread to other buildings.. We used both foam (Aqueous solution) for the class B type and water. At approximately 01:00Hrs, the fires were put under controlled by Firefighters Unusual Circumstance.

It all started when a Benz Truck with registration No. AQM 298 plunged into a fuel Tanker with registration No. AQB 602 loaded with Petroleum products. The fuel (petrol) started to lick from the tanker. Bike riders and other youths in that community started collecting the petroleum products from the tanker. Eye witness told us that the discharge valve of the tanker was forcefully opened. Containers like bucket, five gallons (battas), 'baff' pans, gallons, jerry cans, one liter rubbers, plastic bags helmets from their heads, to collect the petrol that was coming from the Tanker. The fuel (petrol) was now running on the floor and drained to the gutter close to the Choithram Supermarket. They were taken these petroleum products to the nearby locations. In the process some were spilling to the ground unnoticed and even on their bodies. They were dancing and jubilating, hoping that they can collect this petrol to get some money. After they have collected fuel for about 30 to 40 minutes, there was an explosion.

NFF Operations

Fire fighters fought the fire bravely with four (4) fire engines, one each from kissy and Sema Town fire stations, two (2) from Head quarters and a rescue tender from Headquarters. They were refilling from kissy fire station and Macdonald as no working hydrant was within that area.

The fire was offensively attacked from different directions with foam solutions and water.. Large volume of foam chemical concentrate solutions were used to put out the fire. Most of our hoses were badly damage because of the radiation from the fire. At about 01:00hrs, however the fire was put under control. The Police, Military, ONS, NDMA, Red Cross, and high personalities from different Government Institutions, Ministries, and Agencies rendered their supports at the scene. The next day, the National Fire Force was at the scene from day break doing cooling, up to 15:30 hrs, help clear the area, stabilize the area so that traffic can be opened without any fire problem. We gave the final signal for the police to open up the traffic at 15:30 hrs.

Findings

During the investigation, it was observed that:

- The accident took place 30 to 40minutes before the explosion occurred which killed almost 96 people and many were burnt or injured.
- When the accident happened the fuel (petrol) started spilling the ground
- Most of the vehicles, motorbikes and tricycles parked there were completely burnt down by the fire
- The tanker was still having some amount of petrol coming out after the Benz Truck was lifted to remove person that were trapped under the vehicle. This petrol was controlled by the National Fire Force in order not to proceed to another community.
- The route going down Old Wharf was badly affected by the fire
- Some remains of dead bodies were still discovered in the fire scene and were taken to the Connaught Hospital.

- Two containers full with electrical appliances were completely destroyed by the fire
- Night club close to the scene were completely burnt down by the fire.
- The firefighters were fighting the fire with two filling stations close to the fire scene which could be dangerous for their lives.
- More foam solutions was used before the fire was put off.

Cause of the fire

The cause of the fire was as a result of the apprentice trying to pull the battery from the Benz truck with registration No. AQB 298 after the spill of fuel had spread widely across the entire area which resulted into fire, during the process the terminal cable sparked which ignited and burst into flames that cause the explosion claiming lives and properties destroyed worth millions of Leones.

Challenges/Recommendations

- ✓ The National Fire Force is in dare need of equipment and personnel.
- ✓ Construct more Fire stations in Freetown, Western Area Rural and country as whole
- ✓ Procure additional fire engines
- ✓ Create more hydrants in many parts of the city
- ✓ Vehicle and human traffic resulting in severe congestions to access the fire scene
- ✓ Recruit more personnel for firefighting

Our regards with the highest esteem is assured please.

.....
N.A.A. Kamanda Bongay
Chief Fire Officer

ANNEX G



CONTENT OF REPORT

Incident Summary

Relevant regulation

Account of various players

NP (SL) – Oil Marketing Company

Kalinda Enterprise – Dealer, Bo City (Owner of product)

Yayah M. Kallon - Dealer, Old Wharf Wellington

Santique M Sesay Enterprise – Dealer Old Wharf Wellington

Mohamed Shabu Bah – Tyre Service provider, Old Wharf, Wellington.

Future deterrents

Other Safety threats for government actions

REPORT ON THE TANKER ACCIDENT AT OLD WHARF JUNCTION, WELLINGTON, FREETOWN

15,000 litres of Petrol was loaded into a Fuel Tanker with a License Registration Number AQB 602 by NP (SL) Limited at Leonoil Company terminal at 19:40 hours to be delivered to Kalinda Sympathizers Enterprise Gas Station in Bo.

It was observed that the driver of the fuel tanker went to seek tyre service at Old Wharf junction, Wellington which was not available.

Unable to service the tyre, the Driver returned to negotiate his way towards Calaba Town on the main Bai Bureh Road from Old Wharf junction and in the process, it was hit by a tipper truck carrying granite coming from the direction of Calaba Town.

Spillage and scooping of petroleum product by people followed immediately after the hit and continued for about 45 minutes.

Ignition occurred from an unconfirmed source blazing the tanker and the entire wet area leading to loss of lives and properties.

Despite the close proximity, due to precautionary safety measures, it was astonishing to discover that both Hassan Kallon Enterprise and Santigue M. Sesay Enterprise Gas stations at the scene of incident were safe except the latter's office space and generator room which were burnt.

RELEVANT REGULATION ON FUEL TRANSPORTATION

Pursuant to Statutory Instrument of 2016 regarding the downstream petroleum regulation in Sierra Leone especially in Part vi (a) 2,3,4,5,7 and 8. This regulation provides regulatory framework for the transportation of petroleum products by road in Sierra Leone.

- (2). The vehicles shall be maintained in good condition and free from leakage. They shall be conspicuously labeled with the words Highly Inflammable and be painted bright red. An air-space of not less than 10 per cent of their capacity shall be left when filling. All inlets and outlets shall be properly secured and gas-tight.
- (3). Tank vehicles shall be in the charge at all times of a competent person or persons authorised by the licensee. No unauthorised person shall be permitted to ride on the vehicle. Smoking and the use of naked lights shall not be permitted in the vicinity of the vehicle. The vehicle shall not be halted within sixty feet of a fire or open flame.
- (4). Tank vehicles shall be loaded and unloaded in accordance with rules approved by the Director of Public Works for each design of vehicle.
- (5). No tank vehicle shall be loaded or unloaded between sunset and sunrise.

- (6). The premises occupied by tank vehicles when under the control of the licensee, shall be kept in a clean condition free from grass, weeds and all inflammable material.
- (7). Due precautions shall at all times be taken against fire, including the maintenance of fire extinguishing appliances of approved design. Notices prohibiting smoking, lighting of matches, and the carrying of unprotected lights shall be provided and fixed in prominent positions in and about the premises.
- (8). The premises and tank vehicles when under the control of the licensee, shall be efficiently protected against unauthorised approach or interference.

INSURANCE POLICY

Bulk Road Vehicles (BRVs) currently operate with “third party” insurance policy obtained by the owner of BRV. NP (SL) Limited obtains “Goods In -Transit (GIT) Policy” that covers the ownership of fuel products from terminals which ends when the customer indicates receipt of the product. This means the BRVs are not covered with “Comprehensive Insurance Policy”.

(i) NP (SL) LIMITED ACCOUNT IN RESPECT OF THE TRANSPORTING THE FUEL:

- Invoice Number and date: 32728 on 5th November 2021
- Product type and quantity: 15,000 litres of Gasoline (Petrol)
- Vehicle with license registration number AQB 602 was loaded at 19:40 hours, on 5th November, 2021

(ii) DEALER OF KALINDA SYMPATHIZERS’ ENTERPRISE GAS STATION ACCOUNT

Destination: Kalinda Sympathizers Gas Station, Bo Town.

The Dealer of the above gas station, Linda Karim (076 646 351) confirmed placing order for 15,000 litres of petrol for Kalinda Sympathizers Enterprise Gas Station, Gondama on 5th November, 2021.

According to her, she received call from NP SL in the morning hours of 6th November, 2021 informing her of accident involving the Tanker dispatched to deliver the product she ordered.

ACCOUNT OF MANAGERS; YAYA M KALLON & AMIDU SESAY IN HASSAN KALLON ENTERPRISE AND SANTIGUE M. SESAY ENTERPRISE GAS STATIONS OF 38 & 39 OLD WHARF JUNCTION, WELLINGTON, FREETOWN, RESPECTIVELY:

Both Yaya M. Kallon (076 812 517) and Amidu Sesay (030 170 705) observed that a BRV with NP (SL) Limited Logo went to a tyre service point at Old wharf Junction Wellington, Freetown on 5th November, 2021 at about 22:00 hours.

Whether the Fuel Tanker received the tyre service or not was not to their knowledge, but saw the tanker returning to Bai Bureh Road.

The Tanker had halfway negotiated its way to Calaba Town Direction, but was held by the traffic on the other lane of Bai Bureh Road leading to Calaba Town. In the process a truck loaded with granite ramped into the Tanker.

Spillage occurred followed by scooping of the spilled product by crowd of people.

They got worried because of the massive nature of the spillage and the scooping activities of people. As a safety measure, they shut down equipment and condoned their various Gas stations which helped prevent public access to the stations.

The driver of the Tanker used a megaphone and advised the crowd about the danger of the chaotic scooping activities, to which nobody heeded.

Ignition occurred followed by inferno forcing them to flee but Amidu Sesay lost his brother who battled to prevent crowd breaking into his station.

Large number of people scooped fuel product with massive spillage

TYRE SERVICE OPERATOR AT OLD WHARF JUNCTION, WELLINGTON, MOHAMED SHABU BAH (099 560 213) ACCOUNTS:

He said he has a team of Five (5) at his tyre service center

He confirmed Tanker entering his tyre service center at about 21:00 hours on 5th November, 2021 but they were closed for the day to the public.

Not getting the tyre service, the driver of the Tanker returned and negotiated his way to the main Bai Bureh Road. At halfway to join the lanes leading to Calaba Town, a truck came from the other lanes from Calaba Town direction and hit the Tanker causing the fuel product it contained to spill.

A crowd of people in the community ran to the scene with containers to collect the leaking fuel.

The driver of the Tanker took a megaphone from a Mobile phone top up seller and advised the crowd to quit the scene.

People resisted his advice and continue collecting the spilling fuel.

In about 45 minutes an explosion occurred but his team was not affected physically because they stood distance as advised by the Tanker driver.

His tyre service machine was severely damaged.

CRITICAL INDUSTRY SAFETY AND SECURITY ISSUES

PETROJETTY:

PetroJetty (SL) reported of local boats using naked flames underneath the Jetty even when buoys have been installed to wade off local fishing boats. The Jetty lines are always charged with hydrocarbons making this practice extremely unsafe.

MILITARY PERSONEL RESIDENT AT LEONOIL TERMINAL

Leonoil Company Limited has reported a physical and verbal threat perpetrated by one Sgt. Marrah of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF). Leonoil has a claim that Sgt. Marrah has perpetrated several physical and verbal attacks on the properties of the Company over a plot of land leading to financial losses and physical damage. Reports of Sgt. Marrah's threats and attacks perpetrated have been reported to the Sierra Leone Police and Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces with no resolution.

THREATS OF SQUATERS ALONG THE VARIOUS

Squatters along the various Oil marketing company terminals have perpetrated several attacks and other forms of unsafe conducts on personnel and properties of the terminals. As recent as 18th October, 2021 an explosive device was launched at Leonoil Company terminal which was potent enough to ignite the terminal. It was reported to the Sierra Leone Police.

FUTURE DETERRENT MEASURES

OMCs terminal to ensure tank vehicle loading ends at sunset daily.

Tank vehicles loaded close to sunset should not be dispatched until sunrise.

OMCs to establish vulcanizing service within terminals for Bulk Road Vehicles (BRVs) to which all BRVs must attend before dispatch.

BRVs to be covered by Comprehensive Insurance policy instead of third party before contracted as means of transporting petroleum products.

Settlers along the OMCs terminals are serious security and safety threat to operations, government must give urgent attention to their relocations.

Settlers along the OMCs terminals are serious security and safety threat to operations, government must give urgent attention to their relocations.

Regular refresher petroleum products spillage response training for the sector personnel and national security operators.

Regular massive public sensitization (radio talk show, Jingles etc.) in local languages on the danger of unsafe approach or interference with petroleum products especially during spillage.

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Regular massive public sensitization (radio talk show, Jingles etc.) in local languages on the danger of unsafe approach or interference with petroleum products especially during spillage.

ADDRESSED TO: The Hon. Chief Minister
 The Minister, Ministry of Trade and Industry

KEY WORDS

BRV: Bulk Road Vehicle, a motor vehicle or a trailer with one or more tanks fixed to a chassis designed to transport petroleum products.

SPILL: The release of petroleum product into the environment.

TANK: A circular, elliptical or any other acceptable container fixed on chassis to hold petroleum products with one or more compartments.

ULLAGE HEIGHT: Distance between the free surface of the petroleum products and reference point top, measured along the vertical measurement axis.

ANNEX H

REPORT ON THE FUEL TANKER ACCIDENT AT OLD WHARF JUNCTION, WELLINGTON ON THE 5TH NOVEMBER, 2021

From: The Secretary General, Motor Drivers and General Transport Workers' Union (MD>WU)

To: Whom it may Concern.

INTRODUCTION

The tanker with registration number AQB 602 went for tyre service at the vulcanization service point at Old Wharf Junction. The vulcanization center was said to be closed.

The tanker was on its way to negotiate the entrance from the center to join the lane going to Calaba Town. That was when it was hit by the 10-tyre tipper that was coming from Calaba Town end to Freetown. Fuel started to leak on the road.

At about 9:00 PM in the same evening on 5th November, 2021, some members of the union who are also residents of the area heard of the fire accident involving a loaded fuel tanker at Old Wharf Junction, Wellington.

Some of us arrived at the scene of the accidents at various times. There was confusion as people and vehicles were burning by the fire.

Eye witness told us that:

- The Truck/tipper that was carrying the granite stones hit the tanker.
- They could not tell the registration number of the tipper.
- That the tanker was loaded with petroleum fuel.

THE ACCIDENT

The tanker was hit by a tipper at the Old Wharf junction, Wellington. The said 10- tyre tipper was loaded with granite stones on its way from Calaba Town end to Freetown. The driver of the tipper was said to have ran away.

That fuel was leaking on the road after the crash. People were alleged to have been dancing as they scooped the leaking fuel. The driver of the tanker was warning people to keep away as the rush for the fuel will cause fire and further accidents.

One woman who had experienced leaking tanker as a result of road accident in Lebanon told the taxi driver that was carrying her and other passengers not to go beyond PMB. The taxi driver insisted that he was going to make a turn. The woman then forced herself out of the taxi and even got wounded in the process. The taxi was said to have proceeded forward. The driver and all the passengers in the taxi got burnt. The woman was said to have kept shouting and warning people to keep away from the scene of the accident. Some people were said to have mocked her that she was a mad woman.

The said woman happen to be the mother-in-law OF Vandy Lahai; the Secretary to the Union's TipperUnit in Bottom Oku, Wellington Freetown .After about 50 minutes after the road crash, there was a big explosion that caused fire to burn people and properties.

JUST AFTER THE 10-TYRE TIPPER HIT THE TANKER.

People were said to have been dancing and singing as they scooped the fuel oil from the leaking tank The driver of the tanker and his apprentice were said to have warned the people to avoid the scooping the leaking oil as it posed a danger.

The driver at some point even took a mega-phone from a nearby “mobile phone top-up seller and continued warning the people. He became worried as the crowd for the scooping oil overpowered them. He ran to report to the military post at PMB for their intervention. By this time, the rush for the leaking oil had become more severe. There was confusion from all direction. There was a traffic jam of all sorts i.e. Vehicles, Motor Bikes, Pedestrians etc.

He suddenly heard a loud explosion and saw balls of fires rising in the air.

WHAT DID MOTOR DRIVERS THE UNION DO AFTER THE ACCIDENT

The Union embarked on the following activities from the morning of 6th November, 2021:

- A team from the Union's National Secretariat together with its tipper Unit at Bottom Oku, Wellington joined other stakeholders like fire force, SLRSA, SL Red Cross, Sierra Leone Police etc. to help clean the area where the accident took place.
- They also provided tippers and sand for the cleaning activities
- Provided Tipper to convey granite stones to the Calaba Town Police post. These stones were formerly carried by the 10-tyre truck that hit the tanker. Attached is a video AAB/KZK/01.
- Further interviewed the members of the community that were affected.
- The President of the Union and its Secretary General invited some of its members from the Trucks Section and the Oil Tankers Section respectively for further steps forward
- Participated in the burial events of this fire victims
- The President of the Union also donated five hundred thousand Leones (Le 500,000) for the funeral rites of its late members that fell victims to these accidents.
- The Chairman and Secretary of the Union's Tipper Unit at Bottom Oku, Wellington i.e. Mr. Osman Turay (alas Chicken leg) and Vandy Lahai sent written report to the Secretary General of the Union after verbal interview with same.
- The President of the Union invited the driver of the tanker, Moses Bangura and one Mr. T.J to the Union's National Secretariat in Texaco Lorry Part Kissy Freetown. The Secretary General of the Union interviewed the driver concerning the said accidents in the presence of Mr.T.J.

ALLEGED CAUSES OF THE FIRE

- Eye witnesses alleged that the fire was caused by:
- A spark caused by some thief who went to disconnect the battery from the tipper that hit the tanker.
- Rushing thieves who removed the seal on top of the tanker in their desperation to get volumes of fuel.
- By people who rushed to force the discharge valve of tanker in order to get more volume of leaking fuel.

DAMAGES CAUSED BY THE FIRE ACCIDENT

It is believed that over 150 people died including 10 drivers.

Ten (10) drivers were said to have died according to document submitted to the Secretary General of the Union by the Executive of our BUSSES SECTION. The list of drivers who died in this accident, as in ATTACHMENT AAB/KZK-02, will be forwarded after thorough verification by the appropriate parties and authorities.

A surrounding business like MELLOMANS NIGHT CLUB AND RESTAURENT, after SANTIGIE M. SESAY GAS STATIONS of 38 and 39 Old Wharf Junction, was totally burnt down by the fire.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

- ✓ It is appropriate that Motor Drivers Union continue to be involved in any proposed committee that will prevent and / or handle any forceable road accident disasters like fire.
- ✓ That a good working and resilient co-ordinated relationship be promoted between Motor Drivers Union, the Oil Marketing Companies, their Contractors and drivers etc.

SUBMISSION

The Motor Drivers Union wish to extend their sympathies to the victims and the families of those who died from the fire accident, their relatives, the government and people of Sierra Leone. May those who lost their properties be consoled and richly blessed with more provisions.

In Trade Union solidarity,

Sign:

Kaiinnamu A. N. Z. Kumabeh (II).

Secretary General

For and on behalf of MOTOR DRIVERS UNION.

Endorsed by:

Alpha Amadu Bah

President.

NP (SIERRA LEONE) LIMITED

INCIDENT REPORT ON FUEL TANKER ACCIDENT AT OLD WHARF JUNCTION, WELLINGTON ON THE 5TH NOVEMBER 2021.

Background

Bulk Road Vehicle with registration number ABQ 602 (hereinafter referred to as “the Tanker” is owned by Mr. Abassie Thomas (hereinafter referred to as the owner”). Mr. Alpha Tarawally is the secretary of the Owner. The Tanker has a capacity of 15,000 liters.

At the material time of the incident, the Tanker was driven by Mr. Moses Bangure.

The Owner has a contract with NP (SL) Limited by which the Owner agreed to make available the Tanker to collect fuel products from NP Terminal in Freetown and deliver it to the customers of NP anywhere in Sierra Leone.

The Accident

On the 5th November 2021, Mr. Marouf Cole, Head Loss Prevention officer of NP received a call at 9:29 p.m from Mr. Alpha Tarawally the Secretary of the Owner. Mr. Tarawally informed Mr. Marouf Cole that the Tanker has been hit by a truck at Old Wharf Junction, Wellington and that fuel from the tanker was leaking onto the road. He indicated that the accident happened at 9:05 pm.

At the time of the incident, the tanker was loaded with 15,000 liters of patrol. It had collected a load of patrol on the same day from the Leoneoil Terminal, Kissy Freetown, and was transporting it to the NP Station at Kalinda Sympathizer Enterprise in Kebe Town, BO City.

NP’s Response after receipt of the report of the incident.

When Mr. Marouf Cole received the report from Mr. Tarawally, he immediately mobilized the NP Emergency Response Team (“the team”). The Team immediately assembled the spill response materials and left NP Terminal at Kissy Dockyard, Freetown for the accident scene at Old Wharf Junction, Wellington.

While the Team was on the way to the scene of the accident, Mr. Tarawally (the Owner’s secretary) called Mr. Marouf Cole (the person in charge of the Team).

And informed him that the Tanker had burst into flames and the entire vicinity was engulfed in flames.

Mr. Marouf Cole immediately called the National Fire Force on toll-free numbers (300/301) for assistance and support to put out the fire.

Heavy Vehicular and human traffic obstructed and significantly delayed access to the scene of the accident by the Team.

Actions taken

- The Team immediately assembled the spill response materials and left the Terminal at Kissy Dockyard. Whilst enroute, they were informed that the entire vicinity was engulfed in flames.
- The Team immediately called the National Fire Force requesting assistance and support to extinguish the fire at the accident scene.
- The traffic situations (both human and vehicular) prevented the team from gaining access to the scene and the team was unable to drive close to the accident scene to help contain the fire outbreak. The Team had to abandon their designated vehicle and walked to the scene of the accident on foot.
- When the Team reached the scene of the accident (without their fire fighting equipment) they joined the Sierra Leone Fire Force to put out the fire.
- The Fire Force had two (2) Fire engines pumping water to extinguish the fire. Two more fire engines arrived later at the accident scene to complement the efforts of their colleagues in putting out the fire.
- During the process of extinguishing the fire, there was a heavy downpour of rain which greatly assisted in extinguishing the fire.
- Members of the NP Management Team, the Red Cross, National Emergency Medical Services (Ambulances), the Sierra Leone Police, and some members from the community were also at the scene offering support and assistance to transport injured people to hospitals around Freetown and the deceased to the mortuary.

Cause of the Accident

The Team made efforts to investigate the cause of the incident and the fire. According to the driver of the Tanker (Moses Bangura) and the apprentice (Abdulai Lebbie) who were still at the accident scene, they said that the Tanker took on board 15,000 liters of petrol from the LENCO Terminal at Kissy and was enroute to deliver the product to NP SL reseller Kalinda Sympathizer Enterprise Filling Station at Kebe Town in Bo.

The Tanker went to a nearby vulcanizer at Old Wharf Junction to gauge the tires before departing to the consigned destination.

Unfortunately, the vulcanizing station was closed and the driver decided to proceed to Calaba Town.

On his way to Calaba Town, whilst at the Old Wharf intersection, there was traffic along the way. The driver was in a stationary position (in traffic) waiting to join the lane for vehicles traveling from Freetown to Calaba Town. Whilst in that stationary position, the Tanker was hit by a truck (with registration number QAM 928) coming from Calaba Town towards Freetown.

The driver and his apprentice said that they immediately came out of the vehicle. They saw/observed that the truck had hit the tank on the tanker, damaging it and that petrol was leaking from the side of the tanker onto the road. They immediately called Mr. Tarawally (the Owner's Secretary) and informed him about the accident.

The driver and the apprentice also said that they immediately told the crowd of the people who had started to gather around the Tanker and were collecting the petrol coming from the Tanker to stop as the situation was dangerous.

Their pleas were ignored with people saying/ responding aggressively “we day cam fen we living”. The crowd, desperate to scoop as much petrol as possible, ignored the advice of the driver and the apprentice; they overran the entire area with buckets, containers, and plastics bags to scoop the petrol leaking from the Tanker.

The driver informed that he left the scene of the accident to try to get help from the nearby Military at PMB junction after getting a lukewarm response from the police around the accident scene.

The apprentice attached to the Tanker was outnumbered and could not control the crowd which was becoming increasingly violent to his attempts to stop them from approaching the Tanker.

People were coming from all directions with all sorts of containers to scoop the leaking petrol. Traffic on both sides of the road came to a standstill as bike riders, Keke riders and even taxi drivers were leaving their vehicle parked at the center of the road to come and scoop up petrol leaking from the tanker.

There was a sudden explosion and a huge fire outbreak. People scooping fuel were trapped inside the fire including vehicles that were stuck in the traffic.

Possible causes of the fire

Sympathizers and eyewitnesses at the accident narrated different stories as to the cause of the fire. Some said the fire started from the exhaust of a commercial vehicle (Poda poda) that was stuck in the traffic and that was why everybody in the vehicle died.

Others said probably someone was smoking around the scene; while others said it could be from a motorbike that had its engine on and it fell in the fuel.

Some also claimed that the scooping process caused the fire while some alleged that the impact of the collision caused the fire. The apprentice also said that he just saw the explosion and had no idea what the cause was. The apprentice had moved away from the tanker when he realized the danger caused by the activity going on around the tanker.

It was also mentioned that people within the vicinity tried to steal the batteries from the accident vehicle resulting in sparks that led to the fire outbreak.

6TH NOVEMBER 2021

When the NP Emergency Response Team visited the accident scene again at about 7 AM on the 6th November 2021. The following were observed.

- That the police and the military had surrounded the entire accident scene helping to control human traffic and vehicular movement.
- That a team from PRA and several other institutions also arrived at the scene.
- SLRSA later came and removed the affected vehicle to enable free flow of traffic.
- All the burnt vehicles, motorcycles, and Kekes were also evacuated by SLRSA.
- Free flow of traffic was eventually restored and the entire accident scene was cleared.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

At the time of this report, the death toll and the number of people currently receiving medical attention at the various hospital could not be ascertained as different figures are being presented from different sources.

Also, there were different figures from different sources which were presented as the total number of burnt vehicles; motorcycles, and kekehs. The team did not include any figures in this report. Their decision is to wait for confirmation from appropriate government authorities.

Point to note:

- The fuel tanker loaded 15,000 liters of petrol products and departed Leone Oil terminal on the 5th November 2021.
- Product was to be delivered at Kalinda sympathizer Enterprise, Bo.
- The tanker has registration number ABQ 602.
- The truck which hit the tanker has registration number AQM 928 (Granite truck)
- The name of the tanker driver is Moses Bangura
- Accident occurred according to the driver at 9:05 pm on the 5th November 2021 at old wharf junction, wellington.
- Upon investigation, the fuel tanker was hit by AQM 928 truck around 9:05 pm with people scooping the fuel
- The tanker was completely burnt
- The tanker and all other vehicles, bikes, and kekehs were evacuated to Texaco field by the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority

RESPONSE FROM THE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF NP SL LIMITED ON 5TH NOVEMBER, 2021

The Chief Executive Officer and other Managerial Staff of Np SL Limited visited the accident scene minutes after the explosion. They helped and assisted with the following;

- Prior to the visit at the of the accident and Chief Executive Officer called the Chief Fire Officer of National Fire to inform him about the fire outbreak.
- Called the appropriate authorities to take immediate action.
- Monitored the evacuation of corpses to the mortuary.
- Monitored the evacuation of injured victims.
- NP SL team collaborated with the National Disaster Management Agency and other support teams on the ground.

RESPONSE FROM THE BOARD, MANAGEMENT, AND STAFF OF NP SL LIMITED ON 6TH NOVEMBER, 2021

The chairman of the Board and management of NP SL Limited undertook the following activities;

- Np SL medical doctor contacted various hospitals where the victims were taken to enquire about the number of people hospitalized and medical needs for the affected people.
- Management contacted the Trade Minister and Executive chairman PRA to appraise them on action taken by NP.
- Based on advice obtained from NP SL medical Doctor, drugs and other needed medical items were procured from pharmacies in and around the Commercial Business district.
- Published a Press Release empathizing with those affected and their families and sympathizing with the families and loved ones of the bereaved.
- Organized a search team to visit all surrounding clinics and hospitals
- Purchased drugs and other clinical supplies for the injured
- Distributed medical supplies to victims admitted at Connaught, 34 Military and Emergency hospitals.
- Led by the Chairman, the team visited all victims admitted at Choithram, Mile 34, Emergency and Connaught hospital.

ANNEX I

From: The Head of Criminal Investigations Department Headquarters.

To: The Director of Crime Services

January, 2022.

Copy: The Inspector General of Police

“ : The Deputy Inspector General of Police

“ : The Director of Operations – Police Headquarters

“ : Regional Commander – Freetown East

“ : The Local Unit Commander – Kissy Division

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT ON AN ALLEGED FIRE INCIDENT ON K.P.S. C/R NO.5666/2021.

About 2158 hours on Friday, 5th November, 2021, information received from concern citizens that on the aforementioned date at S.L.P.M.B junction, Wellington, Freetown, a Tanker with unknown registration number allegedly loaded with liquid substance suspected to be fuel (Petrol) involved in an accident with one Benz 814 Tipper Truck (loaded with granite stones) with registration number AQM 928 and as a result exploded which claims the lives of many people and several properties of value were burnt down.

ACTIONS TAKEN: On receipt of the report, the following actions were taken:

- ❖ A team of Police Officers headed by the Officer Commanding Wellington Police Post visited the Scene of Crime.
- ❖ The deceased and injured persons were conveyed to different mortuaries and hospitals respectively within Freetown.
- ❖ Photographs of the Scene were obtained by the Scene of Crime Officer (S.O.C.O.) Kissy Division.
- ❖ Statements were obtained from a total of Forty Five (45) affected persons including the tanker driver and witnesses.
- ❖ The scene of crime was visited by a team of Police Officers including Scene of Crime Officers to ascertain the damages.
- ❖ The investigating team also visited the Rokupa Government, Connaught, 34 Military and Emergency hospitals and other health centers where victims were conveyed for immediate medical attention.
- ❖ The team also witnessed the removal of the damaged vehicles and motor bikes to ensure free flow of traffic.
- ❖ Community members were contacted to help identify victims and witnesses.
- ❖ An investigation pool was created at the incident command center to facilitate easy contact with victims and witnesses.
- ❖ Request was sent to the Sierra Leone Roads Authority to facilitate the investigation with the particulars of the owner of the Benz 814 truck with registration number AQM 928.
- ❖ Request sent to the Sierra Leone Commercial Motor Bikes association to assist the investigation with the exact number of motor bikes that got involved in the accident.

BRIEF FACTS:

- ❖ That on Friday 5th November, 2021, about 2140 hours, the tanker with registration number AQB 602 was heading towards Calaba Town direction after allegedly trying to fix a faulty tyre at a fuel station at Old Wharf junction, Wellington, Freetown.
- ❖ That a Benz 814 Tipper Truck with registration number AQM 928 loaded with granite stones was also heading towards inner Freetown from the Calaba Town direction.
- ❖ That the Tanker was trying to negotiate the curve towards Calaba Town direction from the fuel station when the Tipper Truck that was moving in a terrific speed ran into the Tanker.
- ❖ That the Tanker was containing FIFTEEN THOUSAND LITRES of Petrol which was meant to be conveyed to Bo.
- ❖ That immediately the vehicles collided, both of them came to a halt.
- ❖ That immediately after the collusion, there was petrol spillage from the Tanker.
- ❖ There was a mad rush by youths, bike-riders, drivers and business people in the surrounding who ran to the accident scene with containers to collect the leaking petrol. Some of them stored the fuel in nearby garages and other structures in open containers.
- ❖ It is further alleged that the tanker driver shouted at the people to vacate the scene as it was dangerous because they were expecting a blast which will cause fire. None of them heeded to the driver's advice.
- ❖ Few minutes after the accident, there was a very big blast which resulted in a huge flame of fire that engulfed the two vehicles and burning down all vehicles, bikes and structure within the immediate environment as a result of which all those involved in collecting the fuel perished.
- ❖ That as a result of the massive rush to hoard the fuel (Petrol), fire engulfed the entire scene.
- ❖ That the fire became uncontrollable resulting to loss of lives and properties.

FACTS AND FINDINGS: During the course of the investigation, the following facts were highlighted:

- ❖ That the registration of the fuel tanker is AQB 602 which is on contract to National Petroleum Company to be distributing fuel to their customers and was driven by Moses Bangura of Life Line, Kuntolor, Wellington, Freetown.
- ❖ That the Benz 814 truck with registration number AQM 928 is a commercial truck used for the transportation of Sand, granite and other items though the driver and the owner are yet known.
- ❖ That on the day of the incident (Friday 5th November, 2021), the fuel tanker was loaded with FIFTEEN THOUSAND LITRES OF fuel (Petrol) to be discharged at Kalinda Gas Station, Bo Town.
- ❖ That on the day of the incident (Friday 5th November, 2021), the Benz 814 truck was loaded with tons of granite stones heading towards inner Freetown.
- ❖ That the fuel tanker left Leone Oil, Freetown at 1900hours for Kalinda Gas Station, Bo town.
- ❖ That while the tanker was heading to its destination in Bo, the driver detected that one of the vehicle's tires has deflected and decided to mend it at one tire service center along Old Wharf, Wellington, Freetown.

- ❖ That after leaving the tire service centre at Wellington, the tanker driver left heading towards Calaba Town direction.
- ❖ That at the time the tanker was negotiating the road towards Calaba Town end, the Benz 814 truck with registration number AQM 928 was driving towards inner Freetown in a terrific speed.
- ❖ That the Benz 814 truck ended up hitting the tanker from the back.
- ❖ That immediately after the hit, the fuel tanker began to leak fuel (petrol).
- ❖ That large crowd who were around the surrounding began looting the fuel (petrol).
- ❖ That several warnings were given to the crowd to stay off the tanker but they could not heed to the warnings.
- ❖ That while the crowd was looting the fuel, fire erupted and there was a blast at the scene.
- ❖ That the fire caught many of those who were within the surrounding including shops, motor bikes, tricycles and vehicles.
- ❖ That the police, military, fire force and other civilians came to rescue those that have been caught by the fire.
- ❖ That the victims were rushed to the nearby hospitals for immediate medical aids while the dead were taken to Connaught Mortuary.
- ❖ That according to hospitals sources Eighty Four (84) dead bodies was taken to Mortuaries from the scene that night while Forty Seven (47) died on reaching at the hospitals.
- ❖ That a total of Sixty Three (63) people were admitted at various hospitals (Connaught 29, Emergency 14, Choithram 7, 34 Military Hospital 11 and Rokupa hospital 2) in critical conditions undergoing treatment as stated also by the hospital sources.
- ❖ That according to the National Fire Force, the cause of the fire was as a result of the apprentice from the Benz truck trying to pull the battery from the Benz truck after the spillage of the petrol and during the process, the terminal cable sparked which ignited and burst into flames that caused the explosion.
- ❖ That the route going down Old Wharf was seriously affected by the fire.
- ❖ That according to the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority, a total of Twenty-Two (22) Vehicles, Two (2) Tricycles and Forty-One (41) Motor Cycles was recorded to have been engulfed by the fire.
- ❖ That the whereabouts of the Benz truck driver is yet known to get his own account of the incident.

CONCLUSION: In light of all the aforementioned facts, it can be noted that the incident was as a result of the refusal of the crowd to listen to the advice or warning of the danger of the fuel issued by the driver and apprentice of the fuel tanker.

Regards

JOSEPH FALLAH MBAYOH (D/CSP).

FOR: HEAD OF CID

ANNEX J

Sierra Leone Insurance Commission (SLICOM)

Wellington Fire Disaster

Insurance status on the fuel tanker and Recommendation on best practice for the insurance policy of Bulk vehicles.

Action taken by the Commission:

Following the occurrence of the Wellington Fire Disaster involving a fuel tanker, the Commission collaborated with the insurance industry by sending their officials to two media stations; Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) and AYV Television with a view to enlighten the general public as regards the position of insurance on a disaster of that nature.

Procedures for Insurance Claims

Insurance is a structured business and is governed by legal principles. It is therefore a contract that operates within the law. That is why when one buys an insurance product, a Policy Document will be issued to the insured as evidence of the contract.

The policy contains the Terms Exceptions and Conditions of the Contract.

The insurance policy will therefore spell out clearly what is covered by the Insurance Company and what is not covered or limitations of the Policy which means the contract is not open-ended.

When a loss happens, certain procedures must be followed by the claimant as contained in the Policy.

Insurance status of the Fuel Tanker

According to the investigation by the Commission, the Insurer of the fuel tanker that was involved in the accident was insured by Medical and General Insurance Company (MAGIC). The policy that was in force on the said tanker at the time of the accident was a Third-Party Motor Insurance Cover.

This is the least cover amongst the motor insurance policies. It does not cover the owner's vehicle but covers the legal liability to third parties resulting from an accident caused by the insured vehicle. This Cover is unlimited for the death or injury of third parties. There is however a monetary limit to property damage caused by the insured vehicle.

In accordance with the Road Traffic Act, it is an offence for anyone to drive a vehicle or cause a vehicle to be driven on a public road without the basic motor third party liability insurance cover.

Information gathered from MAGIC, the Insurer revealed that it was another vehicle (Truck) that collided with the fuel tanker which led to the fuel spillage that eventually caused the explosion. This was also confirmed by the Police Report.

The issue is which of the two vehicles caused the collision. Our understanding is that it was the truck that hit the fuel tanker which led to the fuel spillage.

The above must be made categorically clear by the Police whose report would have to be relied on by the insurance company involved.

As at the time of making this report, this is a grey area and therefore is still under investigation. Unfortunately, the truck was completely burnt out and we cannot determine the insurer of the truck. But the investigation of this is still very active. The Commission will as always therefore depend on the Police Report.

The fuel tanker's policy was a third-party cover. Which ever of the two vehicles that caused the collision should be held responsible for the accident and their insurer should also be liable for the losses.

But up to the time of writing this report, the Commission is still investigating which company was the insurer of that truck. As said earlier, the Police Report should hopefully make this very clear.

Another technical point worth noting for this accident is the 'proximate cause of the accident. A proximate cause in insurance means an event which sets in motion a train of events which leads to a chain of events that preceded the loss.

That is when the collision took place, there was no explosion. A break in the chain of events occurred when other parties (members of the public) were trying to steal fuel from the tanker and that process resulted in a fire outbreak and subsequent explosion.

The foregoing clearly demonstrates the need to determine who caused the initial collision. The Police should be able to clarify this vital fact.

The insurer of the vehicle responsible for the collision will be held liable for the settlement of the claims.

Other possible insurance policies that might be considered for other parties caught in the accident.

Non-compulsory insurance policies which could be triggered by this disaster if they are in force:

- Goods in Transit – to cover the fuel in transit
- Motor Comprehensive/Fire and Theft policies – Fire to vehicles insured under such policies
- Fire insurance/Assets All Risks – Building, Contents, Merchandise
- Personal/Group Personal Accident Cover for death or injury to someone with this policy. This could be taken by the person or his or employers
- Life – Group and individual policies
- Medical Insurance- covers medical expenses for both in-patient and out-patient treatments

Best practice for insurance coverage on vehicles carrying fuel.

At the time of the accident, the tanker owner opted only for the Minimum Third-Party motor insurance policy. This is limited in terms of coverage and therefore does not cover the loss in question.

The above is understandable because most of the major insurance companies shy away from the coverage of goods in transit cover especially for fuel because of the moral hazard involved. Besides the premiums paid for such hazardous risks are not very attractive. The premiums are not commensurate with the risks involved.

Consequently, even the insurance companies offering such a cover can only give limited cover.

A combination of different types of insurance covers would have been required to get adequate, reliable, and broad protection for the (tanker fuel vehicles).

Going forward, we would recommend the following combined covers (list not exhaustive) should be purchased by any owner of tanker transporting fuel.

Comprehensive motor insurance and a Goods-in-transit policy should be bought. The comprehensive coverage must cover physical damage to the owner's vehicle and other properties, theft and fire losses to the insured. This must be made compulsory to the Oil Companies who are invariably the owners of the tankers.

Liability for injuries and death to third parties must also be covered. The goods-in-transit cover is for the loss of goods (fuel) being hauled in the tanker.

RISK MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CARRIAGE OF INFLAMMABLE PRODUCTS AND EXPLOSIVES

- Conveyance should be restricted to off-peak period
- Such vehicles should be accompanied by an escort if possible, especially if they have to go through built-up areas.
- Enhanced prohibition of street vendors in specific areas for clearance of vehicular traffic.
- Designated parking spaces for passengers and commercial vehicles.

ANNEX J

ACCIDENT EXAMINATION REPORT ON DAF 2300 FUEL BOWSER LORRY WITH REGISTRATION NO AQB 206 IU/COM WHICH WAS INVOLVED IN A ROAD TRAFFIC CRASH ON THE 5TH NOVEMBER, 2021 AT OLD WHARF JUNCTION, ALONG BAI BUREH HIGHWAY, FREETOWN

Vehicle Details

Reg. No: AQB 602
 Make & Type: Daf 2300 Tanker Lorry
 Chassis No: XLRAE23HT0E339460
 Engine No: Not accessible
 Colour: Not visible

The vehicle described above was examined on Thursday the 11th November, 2021 at Kissy Police Barracks Field where it was conveyed to from the scene of the accident.

The examination was witnessed by PC 14126 Kamara DK attached to the Traffic Division Kissy Police Station

Findings: The above described vehicle could not be test-driven neither started to ascertain its general mechanical condition as a result of the fire accident.

However, the remains or residues of the vehicle coupled with the registration plate affixed to it which was as recent as the license period 2020 revealed that, the vehicle has been comparatively new prior to the accident.

Observation: During the course of the examination, it was observed that:

- No sign of any recent accidental damage like burst or explosion neither torn was seen on the entire tanker (Bowser) body panel;
- The accidental damage was concentrated at the center of the fuel Bowser offside body panel where underneath you have the fuel outlet pipe. Affixed to the fuel outlet pipe, there is a valve and a regulating lever. The regulating lever is there to operate the valve that is responsible for the closing and opening of the outlet pipe through which the fuel is discharged. When the outlet pipe which was buckled and forced inwards caused the regulating lever to bent towards anti-clockwise position as a result of the accident, rendered the valve useless or opened which in returned led to the discharged or spillage of the fuel uncontrollable.

Accidental Damage:

- Fuel Bowser offside body panel buckled at the center;
- Fuel outlet pipe buckled and forced inwards and regulating lever bent;
- Offside chassis side member buckled at the center;
- Vehicle diesel Fuel tank badly buckled and torn;

Fire Accidental Damage: The entire vehicle body panel with engine, gearbox and vital vehicle components which contributes to the effectiveness, efficiency and roadworthiness of the vehicle including electrics were all guttered by fire.

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Francis Korvuma Morovia
Snr. Vehicle Examiner

ACCIDENT EXAMINATION REPORT ON MERCEDES BENZ TIPPER LORRY WITH REGISTRATION NO AQM 928 IU/COM WHICH WAS INVOLVED IN A ROAD TRAFFIC CRASH ON THE 5TH NOVEMBER, 2021 AT OLD WHARF JUNCTION, ALONG BAI BUREH HIGHWAY, FREETOWN

Vehicle Details

Reg. No: AQM 928

Make & Type: Mercedes Benz 2628 Tipper Lorry

Chassis No: WDB62413215193076

Engine No: Not accessible patch

Colour: Not visible

The above described vehicle which was travelling towards SLPMB when for some reasons lost control and hit the said fuel tanker Lorry at the center body panel of the fuel Bowser was, examined on Thursday the 11th November, 2021 at Kissy Police Barracks Field where it was conveyed to from the scene of the accident.

The examination was witnessed by PC 14126 Kamara DK attached to the Traffic Division Kissy Police Station

Findings: The vehicle described above could not be test-driven neither started to ascertain its general mechanical condition as a result of the fire accident.

However, the remains of the vehicle coupled with the registration plate affixed to it which was as recent as license period 2020 revealed that, the vehicle has been comparatively new prior to the accident.

Accidental Damage:

- Front metal bumper buckled at the offside and forced backwards;
- Front metal grill buckled and torn from brackets;
- Front windscreen smashed and nearside support pillar buckled;
- Cab roof panel buckled at the front end, forced downwards and torn;
- Cab nearside door panel buckled, frame distorted, lock jammed and glass smashed;
- Cab nearside door step buckled;
- Cab rear windscreen smashed;
- Both external driving mirrors arms buckled and torn;
- Leaf springs stretched beyond specified limit;

Fire Accidental Damage:

Entire vehicle body panel with engine components, transmission system and vital vehicle components which contribute to the roadworthiness of the vehicle were totally gutted by fire.

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Francis Korvuma Morovia
Snr. Vehicle Examiner

