

Providing an Early Warning System To Prevent a Transportation Crisis and its Impacts

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SHORT COMMUNICATION

A truck carrying gasoline has crashed into six buses full of passengers, killing as many as 90 people and wounding 114 others in southeastern Iran. The truck tanker was carrying more than 17,000 liters of gasoline when it lost control and hit one of the buses and burst into flames while the leaking gasoline, which turned the whole area into an inferno, incinerating the buses and several other vehicles which had stopped at a police post in Nosratabad outside the city of Zahedan on the main road from Bam. Reports suggest that at least one other lorry - possibly a second tanker or a vehicle carrying tar - was caught up in the blaze, which firemen took more than two hours to extinguish. Most of those killed in Thursday night's accident at a police checkpoint in Nosratabad, about 1,100 kilometers (690 miles) southeast of the capital Tehran, were women and children waiting inside the buses. The accident happened when the truck was unable to stop and smashed into a bus waiting at a police checkpoint in Nosratabad. The fireball then enveloped five other buses. The victims were burnt to death due to a lack of firefighting equipment at the police station in Nosratabad. In February, about 300 people were killed when a train carrying fuel and chemicals caught fire and exploded in the north-east of the country. At approximately 4.00 a.m. local time, a total of 51 chemical rail cars broke free from the train that they were attached to and rolled down the track, derailing at the next station resulting in a number of chemical leaks and fires in the Iranian City of Neyshabur, in Khorasan province, some 400 miles east of Tehran. Local emergency services (fire, police, and rescue) responded to the incident, along with local and state level officials. Several hours later, as response teams attempted to extinguish fires and contain the incident, a large explosion occurred causing widespread damage and casualties. The explosion has reportedly resulted in some 328 deaths, approximately 460 injured, with many individuals still unaccounted for. Those killed by the blast reportedly include the local governor, mayor and fire chief, as well as many of fire and rescue workers whom were on site responding to the incident. There has been damage (exact extent currently unknown) to 5 nearby villages, including Dehnow and Hashemabad, among others. A team of experts are also determining the health hazards from the fumes. Many residents have been complaining of severe sore throats. The derailed cars contained a variety of chemicals including 17 cars of sulphur (a flammable solid), 6 tank cars of gasoline (highly flammable liquid), 7 cars of fertilizers (explosive when mixed with flammable liquids), and 10 cars of cotton wool. The explosion was severe enough to have been felt 70 km away. After these two tragic and some other similar events, Crisis Management Expert Committee in Management & Planning Bureau of Transportation Research Center in Ministry of Road & Transportation(MRT) started its activities. This committee have begun to plan all necessary policies about the critical events which affects on road and transportation infrastructures and relative sections and human life in case of emergencies. This committee which has obtained its responsibility under activities of Crisis Management Office in Ministry of Defense, is now planning some reforms with considering some researches entitled as below :

- Clarifying the present situation, challenges and possibilities,
- Estimation of lacks in all parts (structure, organization chart, systems, traffic control equipments, human resources, budgets, ...),
- Needs assessment and optimizing the use of present possibilities,
- Managerial & logistic improvement in present structure,
- Planning an operative emergency system to facilitate the operations in case of such crisis,
- Establishment of a crisis management room in MRT,
- Activate the early warning system for 4 section of transportation.

This committee is on first steps towards the improvement of protect human life in four sections : Roads, Railways, Marine and Air Navigation. Four representatives from these part & some professors from technical universities and some other organizations are the members of this committee. One of the main goals of this committee is to provide enough international communications to find enough knowledge from experiments of international organizations & other countries in case of such a crisis.