

Siblings Killed As Boat Capsizes In Rivers



Boat mishap

By Bassey Willie

Mon, 29 Jun 2026 16:32:03 WAT



Two siblings, believed to be between the ages of 23 and 25, have died after the passenger boat conveying them capsized on the Aliya River in Ahoada East Local Government Area of Rivers State.

The incident happened on Saturday evening when boat the conveying about seven passengers capsized, killing the two siblings.

According to reports, the other passengers were rescued alive.

The victims' elder brother, Abraham Gogochuri, told newsmen that the deceased were returning home from work, when the unfortunate incident occurred.

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He said, “They were coming back from work, and there is a route we normally take to our house at Aliya, over bridge axis, in Ahoada, but a construction company is working there; so they boarded a boat to cross the river, but the boat capsized and two of them drowned.

“Although there were about seven people in the boat, only two of them drowned. The boat was not in good condition, and there were no life jackets. That was what led to their death.

“It was just a normal canoe paddled by hand. We are blaming the company handling the construction work because they failed to provide adequate facilities, including strong and durable boats and life jackets.

“The boat they boarded was seriously leaking. They had covered parts of it with wrappers to reduce the leakage, but these boats have been in poor condition for a long time,” he said.

He further lamented that a previously constructed local wooden bridge in the area had collapsed and had not been rebuilt, forcing residents to rely on unsafe boats for transportation.

“There was a ‘monkey’ bridge, a local wooden bridge constructed before now, but it collapsed, and up till today nothing has been done to reconstruct it. That is what has forced people to use these boats.

“I am calling on the appropriate authorities to investigate why there was no safer alternative route for residents travelling to Aliya over bridge. We want justice for my late brother and sister,” he added.

Daily Trust gathered that officers of the Ahoada Police Division had visited the family on Sunday as part of an investigation into the incident.

Meanwhile, the Eze Ekpeye Logbo III, His Imperial Majesty Kelvin Ngozi Anugwo, Akalaka XII, Supreme Monarch of the Ekpeye Ethnic Nation, has expressed deep sorrow over the tragic incident.

In a statement issued on Monday and signed by the palace’s spokesperson, the monarch said he received with profound grief the news of the deaths of Mr. Mekalachi Gogochuri and Ms. Rejoice Gogochuri, who reportedly lost their lives in the boat mishap, while striving to earn an honest living.

The royal father extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and the people of Igbu Ehuda Kingdom over what he described as painful and irreplaceable losses.

He also urged the people of Igbu Ehuda Kingdom to remain united during this difficult period, expressing confidence that God would heal every broken heart and grant the community the strength to overcome the tragedy.

Police spokesperson in Rivers State, ASP Blessing Kaborlo Agabe, who confirmed the incident to Daily Trust, said the driver of the ill-fated boat had been arrested, with investigation ongoing to ascertain the cause of the incident.