

Tragedy: 2 suffocate to death

•Employers arrested

NAPOLEON EHIRHEMEN,
Warri

TWO male middle-aged employees of a marine company were at the weekend suffocated to death while trying to clean-up suspected toxic substance from a barge allegedly owned by Jowason Enterprise on Enerhen river, near Warri, Delta State.

Daily Champion gathered that the deceased identified as Lucky Ejovi, 32 and Michael Onoriode, 24 were both welders said to have been engaged by one Mr. Bethel Otuemo to clean up the alleged toxic substance pumped into a jetty operated by a marine services company (name withheld) which is owned

by two brothers.

According to sources, on the fateful day, one of the surviving workers on the barge, had raised an alarm that two of his colleagues had died inside the barge prompting the arrest of Mr. T.E. Jowason, Bethel Otuemo and the survivor by police at the Enerhen Division where statements were

obtained from them to the effect that the company was not in any way connected with the incident as aired by *Delta Broadcasting Service* (DBS) and *Delta Rainbow Television* (DRTV).

Confirming the incident on telephone, the Divisional Police Officer in charge of Enerhen Police Station, Mr. Fave Semani, a Chief Superintendent of Police (CSP) said, it was a case

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Suffocate

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of suffocation inside the barge, adding that they were supposed to come out at intervals but they overstayed, stressing that the incident had nothing to do with the company as alleged. He however said that the employers of the dead men have been arrested.

Meanwhile the management of the company through its counsel, Mr. Gboloji Okoro has issued a 24-hour ultimatum to the management of DBS and DRTV within which to retract the entire "malicious and diabolical defamation" or face litigation.

According to him, the station had gone on air to attribute the incident to his client which has no connection or link with the barge and the workers. He stated that the company was alleged to be involved in illegal bunkering activities with the said barge which he said is embarrassing to his client.

He said that the only link between his client and Jowason Enterprise is that they use a common Jetty temporarily, he however threatened legal action if the stations fail to carry a retraction five times and apologise to the company.