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Posted to the web 15 October 2007

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Sadeeq Aliyu, Birnin Kebbi
 Kaduna

At least 31 people have been confirmed dead in Dolekaina Village in Kamba Local Government of Kebbi State as a result of an accident involving two canoes carrying passengers and goods.

Our reporter who was in Dolekaina gathered that the accident occurred on Wednesday night when the two ferry canoes were sailing to and from a border market in Lolo Village, which shares borders with Niger and Benin republics.

One of the survivors of the accident Sani Kabu-Kabu explained that it happened around 9 p.m. when their canoe was coming from Lolo to Dolekaina conveying traders who attended Lolo Market Day.

He said halfway through their journey, which was by torch lights, another engine-propelled canoe suspected to be carrying petrol came and when they brushed each other, some petrol sprinkled into the passengers' canoe where burning lanterns of traders caught fire and the canoe was set ablaze.

He said in an attempt to escape, several passengers jumped into the deep water and drowned. It was gathered that rescue operation became very difficult because it occurred in the night and had to be suspended till Thursday morning when 31 bodies were recovered.

Some passengers who escaped with injuries were admitted at Kamba General hospital while more bodies are suspected to be under water as at Thursday evening.

All the 31 bodies recovered have been buried at a cemetery located near the bank of the river where the incident occurred.

The state deputy governor Alhaji Ibrahim K. Aliyu has visited scene and condoled people of the area over the incident. He donated the sum of N500,000.00 to the families of the victims on behalf of the state government and prayed Allah to give them fortitude to bear the loss.

During the visit, the entire village wore a mournful look as people gathered in groups in front of many households receiving condolences.

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