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Nigeria: Eighteen Killed in Rivers Boat Mishap

Bashiru Abdullahi And Abdulkadir Badsha Mukhtar

15 December 2011

Abuja — At least 18 persons were killed in a boat mishap on Tuesday night at the Chiogbonna waterfront in the Mgbuodohia-Rumoulumeni axis of Obio/Akpo Local Government Area of Rivers State



Bad condition of roads linking the community with Port Harcourt that constrained over 40 passengers to board the locally-made small boat which took off from Eagle Island in the state capital city

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The South-south coordinator of NEMA, Umesi Emenike, said 10 out of the victims were rescued alive, while four dead bodies have so far been recovered in a joint rescue operation by NEMA and other aid agencies in the state.

"The incident took place around 11: 30 pm last night. In the night, four persons were rescued. As at this morning, officially, the rescue figure has gone up to 10. It was speculated that the boat was carrying close to 30 to 40 persons. So, if we have been able to rescue 10 persons,

we expect that we still have between 25 and 30 persons," Emenike said

NEMA spokesman Yushau Shuaib said, "the boat was overloaded with passengers some standing"

Emenike added that the incident was critical because it occurred at an odd hour, saying, "if we had had a standing State Emergency Management Agency, information would have been obtained quite on time and people would have been mobilized to the scene on time. Unfortunately, because there is no coordinating agency on ground, it is difficult to get

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Chairman of the community development in the area Mr. Chima Amadi, who spoke earlier, to told newsmen that "the incident happed around 7:30 pm at Chiogbonna waterfront. The boat has been a major means of transportation because of the bad condition of roads. The boat was conveying more than 40 passengers. Only five people have been rescued. We have arranged with the youths of the community to assist in rescuing other victims

"I want to appeal to the state government to come to our aid and consider the suffering of the people of the community. The inhabitants are not happy.

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