

50 PICNICKERS DROWN IN BENUE

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More than 50 persons were feared dead in a boat mishap on River Buruku, in Buruku Local Government Area of Benue State Thursday night.

Witnesses said the victims were mainly picnickers who had gone across the river and were returning to their homes when they met their death.

Also, according to the witnesses, the boat was carrying more than 50 picnickers when the incident happened and no survivor was found as at press time.

Weekly Trust learnt that the driver of the ill-fated boat had raised alarm that the passengers were beyond the capacity of the boat, but that the passengers pleaded with him to convey them to the other side of the bank.

"Sadly, as they got to the middle of the river, the boat capsized, throwing all the passengers on board into the river. We just managed to recover about six bodies," a local told Weekly Trust on condition of anonymity.

Benue State Police Command, through its spokesman, DSP Daniel Ezeala, however, said 10 bodies were recovered so far, adding that the command was not certain about the actual number of people on the boat.

Boat owners and local divers were still making frantic efforts to recover the bodies up to the late hours of yesterday, while search for other victims was still on as the time of filling this report.

Weekly Trust reports that in September this year, a boat with more than 100 passengers on board capsized on River Niger close to Malilli village in Borgu Local Government Area of Niger State.

In October, also another boat mishap happened, which involved about 80 traders who were returning from the weekly market in Kokoli to Ulakami. The boat was said to have split into two and capsized on River Niger.



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