

# 20 villagers fleeing from bandits drown in Niger river

From Abubakar Akote (Minna)  
& Haruna Ibrahim (Abuja)

No fewer than 20 people, including women and children, have reportedly drowned in Guni-Zumba River yesterday morning as they were fleeing from bandits' attack on Guni and Kurgbaku communities in Munya LGA of Niger State.

Daily Trust reports that 21

people died in three boat accidents in Niger in 2020 with another 42 in three separate boat accidents last year.

Sources said the victims were crossing the river to Zumba and Gwada IDP camps in the boat.

One of the sources, Michael Madaki, told our correspondent that 13 bodies had been recovered and buried.

"The villagers were trying to

escape using a boat and the boat capsized," he said.

Shehu Abubakar, another source, told our correspondent that the boat, carrying mostly women and children, was loaded above its capacity and capsized in the middle of the river.

"For now, we don't know the number of casualties because we have not been able to rescue anybody but I can tell you that

over 20 people boarded the boat including women and children."

He decried lack of security presence in the area even with the renewed attacks.

The Niger State Police Command's Public Relations Officer, DSP Wasiu Abiodun, had not responded to calls and a message sent to him by our correspondent as of the time of filing this report.

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