

23 traders feared dead in Kebbi boat accident

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No fewer than 23 people were feared dead in a boat accident on the River Niger in Yauri Local Government Area of Kebbi State.

It was gathered that the boat, with 30 traders and their goods, took off from Kasabo village in Agura Local Government Area of Niger State.

The passengers, mostly from Gebbe, Kasabo, and adjoining communities, were going to Yauri town for commercial

activities on Monday when the boat was struck by strong waves and capsized a few meters to their destination.

Authorities said seven persons had been rescued and four bodies recovered.

Speaking to our correspondent, the secretary of the Red Cross Society, Kebbi State chapter, Malam Ibrahim Ngaski, said four bodies had been recovered from the river as of Tuesday.

"On Tuesday, only four bodies were recovered from the river by the rescue team at the scene of the accident," he said.

Corroborating, the Director General, Niger State Emergency Management Agency, Garba Salihu, said among the dead bodies recovered was that of a pastor and three others who were indigenes of Niger State traveling to Kebbi State.

He, however, said 12 people had been rescued while six were still missing but effort was ongoing to rescue them.

But the chief press secretary to the Kebbi State governor, Ahmed Idris, in a release, confirmed that seven people were rescued and 23 confirmed drowned.

He said search parties were at the scene to recover the bodies of those still missing.

The state governor, Nasir Idris, in a condolence message to the affected community and families, urged them to accept the incident as the will of God.

"I want to urge you to urge you to accept what happened in good faith. We should also continue to pray to Allah to forgive their shortcomings and grant them Jannatul Firdaus," he said in the statement.

Earlier reports had quote the Chairman of Yauri Local Government, Alhaji Bala Mohammed, as telling

journalists that 40 traders were missing in the boat accident.

He said the boat capsized as a result of waves in River Niger and that 10 people had been rescued while rescued workers, including the Red Cross, were still recovering bodies in the river.

The Police Public Relations Officer in the state, SP Nafiu Abubakar, and the Executive Secretary of the Kebbi State Emergency Management Agency (KSEMA), Abbas Rabi'u Kamba, could not be reached to confirm the number of those who died in the accident.